



HOW DOES MUSIC GET
ON AIR?

DATABASE_D AIRPLAY

A STUDY BY
ORANGE 94.0, EDUCULT AND MICA - MUSIC AUSTRIA
ON THE ROLE OF MUSIC DATABASES IN NON-COMMERCIAL
COMMUNITY RADIO



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A black and white halftone photograph of a person in a white shirt playing a guitar on a stage. The person is positioned in the center, with their arms and hands visible as they play. The background is dark, and the overall image has a grainy, dotted texture characteristic of halftone printing.

NON/RANDOM ORDER MUSIC

PROJECT OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Despite shifts in media landscapes, radio has always been, and continues to be, an essential medium for sharing music. In the programming of non-commercial community radio, music holds a central role. The aim is not to create a continuous listening experience for one specific advertising target group, but to make diversity and niche music accessible. Community radio aims to offer a platform for musicians and music that receive little to no airplay on commercial or public broadcasters.

This goal is achieved through a wide range of specialised music programmes curated by volunteer radio hosts with extensive expertise. Beyond these curated programmes, airtime between regularly scheduled shows is dedicated to music that aligns with specific objectives. This content typically comes from a music archive, assembled either automatically from a database or manually curated for on-air broadcast.

Random Order –
094 Musik

At Vienna's community radio ORANGE 94.0, the segments between regular broadcasts are known as "Random Order – 094 Musik." This programming draws from a music archive that has been in use for over a decade and is continuously updated with new tracks by a curating music editor. The archive, organised in a database, currently includes around 17,000 files in active rotation. For comparison, commercial radio stations generally operate with playlists and rotations of 200 to 2,000 songs. The tracks in ORANGE 94.0's archive are tagged by genre, time of day, and frequency of playout. In 2023, the automated music programme accounted for approximately 44% of the station's annual airtime, with a significant portion airing overnight.

This study provides a first comprehensive overview of perspectives on questions such as: criteria for selecting tracks for the archive, who participates in this selection process, and how radio hosts can access the archive. ORANGE 94.0 in Vienna served as the starting point, with additional examples drawn from other community radio stations in Austria and abroad. Discussing with music scene representatives, experts, and radio hosts revealed how music databases shape a radio's profile and how they can promote local and underrepresented music.

BACKGROUND

A key impetus for this project came from discussions at ORANGE 94.0 about the need for and access to a central music archive for radio hosts. In addition to individual music files, radio hosts wanted tools for searching and discovering suitable tracks for their shows. *How can existing knowledge about music be better shared and pooled?*

There is also a practical need to update ORANGE 94.0's existing database, both technically and in terms of content. *Can a music archive keep growing indefinitely?* What impact does an ever-expanding number of tracks have on the on air programme?

Practical questions led to deeper structural and content-based discussions: *How can community radio stations fulfil their mission to represent the local music scene and support underrepresented artists and genres?* How can focused themes still be highlighted within an automated music programme? And finally, *what structures are needed for the collaborative curation of music pools?*

These discussions made it more and more obvious that a music archive is a powerful tool. The design of the database managing the archive and its features directly and indirectly shape the archive's content. From access rights for adding and retrieving data to the complex matter of indexing keywords, a music database significantly influences what listeners ultimately hear on the radio.

Guiding questions of the study

RESEARCH METHODS

To examine the use of music, music archives, and databases in community radio stations, this exploratory study considers several aspects:

- » *Content:* Assessing the role of music in community radio, its contribution to the station's identity and positioning, and how selections are made.
- » *Structure:* Investigating requirements for populating, managing, and curating a music database, along with organising participation and knowledge exchange.

- » Technical: Examining technical requirements and potential solutions for a music database.
- » Legal: Addressing access to music for volunteer radio hosts.
- » Financial: Identifying funding needs for infrastructure, organisational processes, and the support of music on community radio.

Main study, secondary study & recommendations

The exploratory study provides multiple perspectives on music in community radio. Recommendations can be found from page 55 onwards.

In addition to the primary study, a secondary study compared international examples from community radio stations and independent media organisations across Europe. Insights and recommendations derived from these case studies provide further context and guidance for cultural policies.

The methodology combines literature review and research on the current state of music in community radio with interviews and focus groups. Between spring and summer 2024, ten interviews were conducted in Austria, including group interviews. Participants included programme directors, music editors, technicians, legal experts, AI specialists, media advocates, and representatives of the music community. Case studies focused on ORANGE 94.0 and three additional Austrian community radio stations. Three focus groups brought together radio hosts, music scene representatives, and curators. For international comparison, five interviews with music editors from community radios in the USA, Ireland, Hungary, Germany, and European community media organisations were conducted.

The collected material underwent qualitative content analysis, supported by coding software. In line with the study's exploratory nature, the analysis aimed to create a multi-perspective view on music in community radio, offering a foundation for future discussions.

CONSIDERATIONS ON THE SELECTION OF EXPERTS

In selecting experts from the music community and radio practice, we aimed for diverse backgrounds with input from musicians, event organisers, and labels, particularly those who are well-networked and whose work focuses on diversity, niche support, newcomers, and DIY approaches. We included experiences from diasporic communities and explored the importance of their music on the radio, as well as various uses

of music across music shows and spoken word programmes. Last-minute changes in availability made balancing the different perspectives challenging, and varying knowledge levels among participants proved to be an obstacle in achieving a shared discussion baseline in the focus groups. However, this highlights the importance of ongoing spaces for discussion about music in community radio.

We extend our gratitude to all who shared their expertise and perspectives from radio and musical practice. This study brings together a wealth of individual knowledge, documenting a multifaceted view of music in community radio for the first time.

A list of participants is provided at the end of the publication. The results aim to support the development of structures that enable diverse music curation within, but not limited to, community radio stations.

DATABASE OR ARCHIVE?

The starting point for this study is the music database currently in use at ORANGE 94.0 in Vienna. Over the course of the project, terms like “archive”, “collection”, “pool”, and other descriptions have emerged to refer to the subject of this study. To clarify how these terms will be used going forward, we would like to outline the following working definitions:

The music archive refers to the totality of physically available sound carriers or electronically stored data in the form of music files, including their associated metadata.

We understand the database as a tool to organise and manage this data in the form of datasets. In addition to metadata such as title, artist, year of release, etc., this includes features that allow for indexing the data and creating connections between it. In this way, the data in the archive becomes discoverable and accessible.

To make use of the data, a software and user interface is needed, enabling both the recording and retrieval of the data.

In discussing solutions for organising music in community radio, we will also refer to various music pools. These are segments of the archive, each geared towards different pur-

Working definitions

What exactly are we talking about when we discuss collections of music assembled for use in radio?

Organisation of knowledge

The definition of terms and categories needs a thoughtful approach.

poses. For example, one pool could be designed for exchange among radio hosts, while another is intended for playout within the centrally curated music programme. These pools may overlap, so they should not be seen as rigidly separated systems.

It is important to us that we do not regard a database as a purely technical tool, but rather as one of organising, shaping and curating. Organising knowledge always involves making decisions about what to include and what to exclude, as well as enacting power over how terms and categories are to be defined. With this in mind, we recommend a thoughtful approach to all subsequent steps in the development of a future database.

“UNDERREPRESENTED” MUSIC

When we speak of “underrepresentation” to describe the focus in selecting music for community radio, we draw on a variety of characteristics, such as language, identity, genre, or even the sound quality of recordings. We consider music as underrepresented, first and foremost, if it receives (too) little attention in commercial media. This includes songs in minority languages, music by artists from marginalised social groups, or experimental and subcultural music genres. Additionally, music with lower technical production quality, often seen in DIY projects or among independent artists, is rarely considered within the commercial music distribution framework. Factors such as length, structure, instrumentation, or content deemed offensive can also lead to exclusion from commercial airplay.

At the same time, also the music programme in community radio clearly represents a selection, meaning that certain types of music are also underrepresented within community radio.

Many musicians, particularly from marginalised communities, struggle against stereotypes and discrimination, which is evident in the way their music is (re)presented in the media. The temporal and regional contexts in which music is produced also play a role, influencing how identity is constructed within musical discourse.

Underrepresentation and identity

The discussion of underrepresentation is closely tied to questions of identity. The music heard on community radio reflects cultural and social identities - both in its musical genres and through artists who represent activist, feminist, queer, and diasporic movements.

QUALITATIVE VS QUANTITATIVE REPRESENTATION

It is also essential to distinguish between qualitative and quantitative representation. *Quantitative representation* refers to the number of titles present in a music archive and which songs by whom are played on the radio programme. *Qualitative representation*, on the other hand, considers how the stories and contexts of artists are conveyed on the radio and which communication strategies are able to promote and highlight these musicians.

For community radio, this entails a commitment to actively supporting the presence of underrepresented voices across the overall programme, to promote diversity and inclusion. This requires reflecting on one's own approach to editorial work and being aware that one is *part of larger societal structures that convey power and a specific (privileged) positionality*.

How the study participants assessed the issue of representation is discussed in the chapter *"Promoting structurally underrepresented music, emerging artists, and local music"*.

WHAT ROLE DOES RADIO STILL PLAY IN THE MUSIC SCENE?

A few clicks and you can listen to all songs of the world.

At community radios music is carefully hand-selected.

New sounds and contextual knowledge

When we listen to the radio, we're never truly alone.

It's hardly an exaggeration to say that, over the past two decades, the way we listen to music has fundamentally changed. Physical media such as CDs, cassettes, and vinyl still exist – vinyl, in particular, enjoys renewed popularity as a “cult object”. And yet, *the true mass medium has become the digital file*. Online platforms – streaming services, video platforms, and file-sharing sites – now largely shape people's listening habits. Music has become something of a “public commodity”. With a computer or smartphone and a few clicks, anyone can seemingly listen to and share almost any song in the world, spanning genres, styles, and history.

This transformation has, of course, affected radio as well. The era of classic “broadcast”, where a large portion of the population consumed music primarily through a few established radio stations, is largely over. Radio is now just one medium among many and has to fight the reputation of being an anachronism. But has radio truly become obsolete as an outdated format? Not necessarily – instead, its significance has shifted. *The medium is once again moving closer to its listeners*. Amid the sometimes overwhelming “flood” of media offerings, radio plays an important role as a filter and, especially at the local level, contributes to a sense of identity. The people behind the broadcasts are key to this. In the music departments of public stations, or through the programmes of community radio hosts, music is selected with meticulous care. In community radio, particularly, every song on air is chosen by an individual who has previewed it and brought it to life “on air”.

The music programming in community radio is shaped by the search for new sounds, combined with careful consideration what suits a particular show, the radio station, and, of course, the specific audience. Radio also offers the opportunity to place the music in context, enrich it with the knowledge of the show's creators, and introduce the people behind each song.

Making radio, and also listening to it, creates a sense of closeness. Radio hosts extend an invitation to their audience to listen together and share experiences with and about music. Whether at home by the receiver or while being on the move, when we listen, we're never truly alone. There are always oth-

er listeners who, at this moment, are hearing the same song. Listening to the radio connects people; it creates communities.

Community radio is rarely a medium that runs passively in the background. It represents a conscious commitment to tuning in and listening. The connection with the audience often arises from the close relationship between many shows and local music scenes. For bands, an appearance or an interview on a show can offer an important platform. Here, musicians receive appreciation, have the freedom to experiment and explore. Unlike endless playlists, the shared experience of a single song on the radio becomes a small event. From these first attempts, music can evolve, grow alongside the audience and the scene, and eventually even make the leap to larger stages.

For listeners, community radio offers the chance to discover something new and to be inspired with every show. Unlike an algorithm, radio hosts can continually challenge, surprise, and recalibrate listening habits.



MUSIC ECONOMY – RADIO LANDSCAPE

INFO & FACTS

Federal, State, and Local Support

In Austria, there is a wide range of financial support available for music, provided by public institutions as well as private organisations. However, a significant portion of public fun

For the underrepresented groups that are the focus here – such as emerging artists outside the mainstream and musicians in genres with limited public attention – the following support options are especially relevant:

Funding is usually awarded for specific projects, such as concerts, recording or releasing albums, composition grants, marketing activities, or artistic development.

Work scholarships from the Ministry of Arts and Culture and the federal states, as well as additional federal grants, are often targeted towards musicians in the fields of contemporary music, classical, or jazz, and are realistically accessible mainly to artists who are not at the very start of their careers.

Grants from the Foreign Ministry, often offered through Austrian Cultural Forums and embassies, are available to musicians primarily as travel support for international concert activities.

The range of support at the state level varies widely, with most funds directed towards concerts, and sometimes also towards album production. At the local level, the chances of obtaining support can be quite promising, especially in smaller communities where competition is limited.

Collecting Societies

Austrian music collecting societies (AKM, austro mechana, LSG Interpreten und Produzenten) provide funding through “Soziale und Kulturelle Einrichtungen“ (SKE), which primarily support event organisers or organisations. For musicians themselves, the SKE Fund of austro mechana is a particularly important funding body. The SKE Fund supports contemporary composers who receive royalties through austro mechana. Cultural funding also goes to orchestras, organisers, small labels, and organisations focused on contemporary composers. Direct support to composers is available for music productions, music installations, training, and education abroad as well as workshops, and composition commissions.

SOCIAL SUPPORT

AQUAS (Altersquoten und andere soziale Leistungen GmbH) provides monthly pension-security payments, subsistence contributions, and assistance in cases of severe hardship or finan-

cial difficulty, as well as contributions towards social insurance, jointly funded by austro mechana and AKM.

The “Künstler-Sozialversicherungsfonds” (KSVF) also provides contributions to social insurance payments for self-employed artists.

BUSINESS SUPPORT

In the field of business development, companies in the music industry have access to support options, these are generally not intended for the musicians who are the focus of this study.

ÖSTERREICHISCHER MUSIKFONDS

The Austrian Music Fund is an initiative supporting professional Austrian music productions to enhance their distribution and reach. The fund is open to all Austrian-based music creators, performers, music producers, music publishers, and labels. It provides production and tour support, funding for entering new international markets, and marketing support.

AUSTRIAN MUSIC EXPORT

Austrian Music Export is a joint initiative by mica – music austria and the Austrian Music Fund. This music export office works to internationalise Austrian music, supporting activities from presenting Austrian acts at international festivals to organising singer/songwriter and producer camps.

MICA – MUSIC AUSTRIA

The Austrian Music Information Centre mica – music austria operates under the motto “Help for Self-Help” and offers a wide range of services to the music scene. Experts with years of professional experience provide advice on all topics that can arise over a musician’s career, from finding a suitable record label, funding opportunities, or online services, to legal issues such as contract negotiations.

On the website musicaustria.at/praxiswissen, information is available on funding, collecting societies, copyright, label creation, commerce and distribution, publishing, live performances, album production, licensing, self-promotion, tax and social in-

surance, minimum fee recommendations, resources for dealing with abuse of power, climate issues in the music industry, as well as sample contracts in German and English. The website also provides information on festivals, venues, training, and music trade, as well as on mica – music austria's regional portals for each federal state.

All of mica – music austria's advisory services are free of charge, with offices located in Vienna as well as mica service centres in Innsbruck and Salzburg.

ADDITIONAL ADVOCACY GROUPS

Further advisory services are available to members of the Music Guild, the Austrian Composers Association, the Association of Independent Record Companies, Music Publishers and Music Producers Austria (VTMÖ), and younion, the trade union for dependent-employed musicians.

TIPS FOR NEWCOMERS

Just as every person is unique, every music career is individual. There's no guaranteed path to success, but there are useful steps that can help.

Realistic expectations can prevent disappointment

- » The music industry is fiercely competitive, with far more (often well-trained) musicians than the market can support. Making a living solely from one's music is possible for only a small fraction of musicians, and even they often need to pursue additional jobs to make ends meet.
- » The enjoyment of creating music should be the main focus. If the primary goal is to make a lot of money, other career fields may be a better choice.
- » Few musicians have lifelong careers. Having a "Plan B", such as additional training or education, can help prevent financial hardship in later years.
- » While it's easy to release music online, this doesn't guarantee an audience. Currently, over 100,000 new songs are uploaded to streaming platforms daily, a

quarter of the songs available worldwide (over 45 million) haven't been played even once!

- » A sustained effort is usually essential for success. Even viral hits by newcomers often have a lengthy backstory and a professional team behind them. Long-term career success usually requires a gradual buildup. Unrealistic timelines and unattainable goals lead to frustration. Even The Beatles performed over 1,000 times before releasing their first single...
- » The music ecosystem is highly complex. Navigating it effectively is crucial for musicians to make informed decisions. Practical training and advisory services should be used – making good music alone isn't enough.
- » Unfortunately, there are people in the industry who exploit inexperience. Many will make grand promises to persuade musicians to sign unfavourable contracts. Legal advice should be sought before signing any contract or entering into an agreement if the musician is unfamiliar with fair or standard conditions. Free legal advice is available at mica – music austria.
- » The start of a career usually involves handling a lot on one's own, from releasing and promoting music to playing initial gigs. At a certain stage, it may be beneficial to find partners, such as managers, labels, publishers, or booking agencies, to allow more focus on music-making itself. Beyond seeking advice on contract terms, connecting with fellow musicians to share experiences is often helpful.
- » And one more advice: Prioritise health! For a successful and fulfilling long-term career, it's important not to take on every opportunity at once. Also, never let career ambitions become a reason to tolerate or succumb to power abuse or exploitation.

Seek advice
and support

Non-commercial community radio has existed in Austria since the late 1990s, following the end of the state broadcasting monopoly. They have played a significant role in media-related political activism, contributing to making media more accessible. However, it wasn't until 2009 that they received legal recognition as a distinct pillar of Austria's broadcasting landscape.

Community radios are part of the Verband Freier Rundfunk Österreich (Association of Community Broadcasting in Austria), which also includes two community TV stations. The association has been advocating for the sector since 1993. Through collective action, they succeeded in securing funding for community radio from the Non-Commercial Broadcasting Fund of the Broadcasting and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority over the years.

In their own charter, these stations commit to non-profit principles, open access, and participatory structures. They see themselves as a voice for the local populations within their broadcasting areas. They stand for freedom of expression, diversity of opinion, equality, human dignity, and democracy, and actively work against discrimination. Priority is given to individuals and groups who, due to their societal marginalisation or discrimination, rarely can make their voices heard.

Community radios are closely connected to their local music scenes. They see themselves as part of these scenes and view their mission as providing them with an on-air platform. The music programming at community radio stations focuses on artists and genres that are underrepresented or barely represented in the media. Unlike the music formatting of commercial stations, their radio programmes stand out for their special diversity. Community radios offer the music scene airplay, initial media appearances, and networking within a supportive community.

<https://www.freier-rundfunk.at/charta.html>

Currently,
14 community
radio stations
are broadcasting
in Austria

Campus & City Radio
St. Pölten; FREIRAD,
Innsbruck; Freies Ra-
dio B138, Kirchdorf/
Krems; Freies Ra-
dio Freistadt; Freies
Radio Salzkammergut;
ORANGE 94.0, Wien;
Proton, Vorarlberg;
Radio AGORA 105,5,
Kärnten; Radio FREE-
QUENNS, Ennstal; Ra-
dio FRO, Linz; Radio
Helsinki, Graz; Ra-
dio MORA, Burgenland;
Radio Ypsilon, Holla-
brunn; Radiofabrik,
Salzburg und Pinzgau

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR MUSIC

IN RADIO

COPYRIGHT AND EXPLOITATION RIGHTS

There are legal foundations for playing music on the radio, which mainly revolve around complex issues of copyright and exploitation rights. The key focus is on the rights of the various participants who contribute to the creation and distribution of music:

- » Creators: Composers and lyricists who create the music.
- » Performers: Artists who perform or record the work.
- » Organisers: Event organisers who manage concerts and performances.
- » Record labels: Producers and labels who hold the rights to the recordings (this includes all recordings of acoustic events, even if recorded with a mobile phone).

» In general, the public broadcast of “commercially available recordings” is allowed, including digital files. Platforms like YouTube and similar services use recordings, but they do not own rights to them, just like record stores don't own rights to the music they sell.

» Streaming platforms like YouTube or Spotify acquire usage licenses from collecting societies to publicly distribute protected works.

» Currently, there are no clear legal regulations regarding the use of music from online platforms. However, if the music comes from official uploads (i.e., from the artist's or label's official channels), there are reasonable arguments that using it on the radio could be legal. But there are no judicial precedents on this issue.

» For concert recordings that the radio stations make themselves, consent from the event organisers and performers must be obtained.

» Music can be edited for radio in line with “industry-standard practices”. This includes things like commentary over the music, radio edits of songs, or using music snippets in jingles. However, there are no judicial rulings on these practices either.

Who and what is protected?

How can music be used? And from which sources?

What needs to be considered with regard to online platforms, concert recordings and editing

COLLECTING SOCIETIES

- » Enter into contracts with composers and performers (e.g. singers) and manage their rights.
- » Sign usage contracts with, among others, radio stations.

In Austria, the main collecting societies include:

- » AKM for composers and lyricists: performance, online, and broadcasting rights.
- » Austro Mechana for composers: reproduction rights.
- » LSG for performers and record manufacturers: all rights.

Royalties...

...are only paid to members of collecting societies

To receive royalties from the collecting societies, musicians must become members. By doing so, they delegate the management of their rights to the collecting society for all their works. Reproduction rights are especially relevant for radio because even storing music in a playlist is a form of reproduction. This plays an important role in music databases.

CONTRACTS OF THE AUSTRIAN COMMUNITY RADIOS

flat-rate payment

Blanket agreement of VFRÖ

The Austrian community radios have blanket agreements with collecting societies, which are negotiated and concluded by the Association of Community Broadcasting Austria (VFRÖ) on behalf of all community radio stations. These contracts aim to offer a solution that is affordable for non-commercial stations and are linked to funding from the Non-Commercial Broadcasting Fund. The contracts cover rights for music in terrestrial broadcasting via FM, simulcasting (live streaming), and programme archiving on the platforms *freie-radios.online* and *cba.media*. Within the VFRÖ, a key for dividing the license fees among the member stations is used, which is based on their revenues.

The current contracts provide a flat-rate payment for music rights, rather than individual payments for each song played. How the contributions are specifically paid out to musicians is regulated by the collecting societies. Since the payment structure – at least for commercial broadcasters – is based on reach, it can be assumed that very small sums would be earned through airplay on community radios.

The flat-rate payment and distribution of royalties has sparked a debate about how the contributions made by community radios to collecting societies could be better utilised to support the musicians whose music is actually played.

Discussed solutions include models based on exemplary tracks or time periods, automated identification of songs, or dedicated payments for music produced in Austria. See also “Legal Framework & Royalties”, p. 46

Debate about payment allocations

„So I don't know whether the model really works like that. If you're making money from playing my music, then I want a share in that money. It probably comes down to: If the school choir are singing your song, do you want to get paid for that? But the school choir aren't making any money, so how are they going to pay you?“ (Ciaran Murray, Near FM, Dublin)

CULTURAL AND MEDIA POLICY

ARGUMENTATION

Community radios play a vital role in promoting diversity of opinion and media pluralism. They complement and compensate for the core mission of public broadcasting, particularly when it comes to addressing the “*diversity of interests of all listeners*”. For example, community radios are crucial for the “*promotion of understanding for all aspects of democratic co-existence*”, “*adequate consideration and promotion of Austrian artistic and creative production*”, and “*the provision of a diverse cultural offering*“ (ORF-Gesetz §4).

After more than 25 years of community radio existence in Austria, this role is largely undisputed in the media political landscape. The rise of filter bubbles, algorithm-driven media consumption, and attempts to weaken the public service mandate of ORF (Austria's national broadcaster), as feared by organisations like ARGE Kulturelle Vielfalt (the central civil society dialogue platform of the Austrian UNESCO Commission) and the Austrian Music Council, highlight the growing importance of community media. Community radios serve as counterprojects to commercialisation and as places for community building against increasing fragmentation and individualisation.

- » What is required are both the understanding and resources to facilitate moderated communication processes. Only through this approach can diversity transcend mere coexistence of actors and allow for genuine exchange.

Relevance from the niche

In attempting to create proximity within the local community and niche, community media must also grapple with questions of

Reach and relevance

reach and relevance. On one hand, this means avoiding being drowned out in the vast diversity of media offerings and production possibilities and striving to be recognised as a serious forum that creates public visibility. On the other hand, community media and their users are shaped by the tension between niche appeal and the desire for broader public attention. This balancing act is reflected in the programmatic aim to serve very specific groups while still offering a cohesive music programme that resonates with a wider audience.

Community radio, through its non-commercial principles, offers the opportunity to express oneself freely, unburdened by the pressure of mass appeal and quantity. This way small linguistic communities, avant-garde artistic positions, or specialised and locally rooted music scenes can secure airtime. At the same time, these minoritarian positions need to be mainstreamed to create societal resonance for their content and forms of expression.

- » In this duality, it is crucial to preserve the freedom from the pressure of reaching high audience numbers. At the same time, there is a need to improve technical coverage, develop networking structures between different scenes and stakeholders, and interact with those who (potentially) listen.

COPYRIGHT AND MUSIC AS PUBLIC CULTURAL GOOD

The debate over a targeted distribution of royalties for musicians introduces another layer of complexity. In radio broadcasts, two contradictory elements come together: creative content produced with the goal of wide public dissemination, often publicly funded, and copyrighted works – in this case music – which are restricted in access for the purpose of sale and require payment in order to be heard. The licenses for these works must be paid for by radio stations for broadcasting purposes.

Thus, what is needed is consistent funding specifically for music produced outside of market mechanisms, so that it can be played on community radios.

Support of music beyond market mechanisms

See the arguments of Paul Stepan and Elisabeth Mayerhofer in: Verband Freier Radios Österreich (ed.): Gemeinnützige Medien-Archive in Österreich. Rechtliche Grundlagen, Nutzungsbarrieren und Lösungsansätze. facultas, 2014

**“THE MEMBERS OF ARGE KULTURELLE VIEL-
FALT DEMAND A RESPONSIBLE, SUSTAINABLE,
AND DEMOCRACY-PROMOTING MEDIA POLICY
FROM THE GOVERNMENT AND ALL POLITICAL
PARTIES IN PARLIAMENT.**

**THEY ADVOCATE FOR A TRIPARTITE BROAD-
CASTING SYSTEM (PUBLIC SERVICE, PRIVATE
COMMERCIAL, PRIVATE NON-COMMERCIAL)
THAT GUARANTEES THE INCREASED PRESENCE
AND BROADCASTING OF CULTURALLY DIVERSE
PROGRAMMES AS WELL AS ART AND CULTURE
FROM AUSTRIAN ARTISTS AND CREATORS.”**

Final communiqué ARGE Kulturelle Vielfalt 2023
regarding the UNESCO Convention on the Protec-
tion and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural
Expressions



RESEARCH RESULTS

THE ANALYSIS

CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNITY RADIO

Creative freedom and independence from commercial and state interests are essential features that characterise community radio stations. By doing so, they contribute to diversity of opinion in public discourse. Additionally, many different perspectives and levels of professionalism come together in community radio. These stations are characterised by a great openness in relation to topics, formats, languages, genres, etc. Community radio stations are typically organised around a core structure that enables the operation of the station, while radio hosts produce their own programmes on a voluntary basis. Although the analysis shows that there are sometimes hierarchies between paid and voluntary radio hosts, community radio is overall defined by a commitment to participation, access, and diversity:

"It's radio from the bottom up. So, there is enough knowledge gathered so that it runs on a substantive, technically professional level, while at the same time there is enough openness that people [without a radio background] really have the opportunity to go on air" (Dieter Kovačič / Dieb13, Musician).

Community radio thus enables the participation of a diverse range of people and perspectives, with a focus on community:

"In community radio, the community aspect is central, you can bring people in and simply be creative together" (Focus Group 3).

**"The communities,
that is the strength"
(Focus Group 2).**

Accordingly, community radio plays an important role in relation to underrepresented musicians, local music, and newcomers (see p. 30). What distinguishes community radio from commercial or public service radio is the access to music: *"Things are played here that might cause listeners to switch to other stations. Community radio is listened to much more actively; it's not a medium that runs in the background, it's a much stronger, personal choice" (Gerald Hollerer, FM4).*

MUSIC AS A CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROFILE AND POSITIONING OF COMMUNITY RADIO

Overall, the analysis clearly shows that music makes an important contribution to the profile of each radio station and to its individual positioning. Music plays a crucial role in distinguishing community

radio from the “mainstream” of commercial stations. Although this distinction varies in intensity, it is present in all the radio stations interviewed. Community radio stations also share the goal of promoting local and regional music and musicians. At the same time, music is a strong distinguishing factor between different community radios. The analysis shows that music programmes and the curation of music in community radio are shaped by individual preferences and specific radio hosts, who select the music and contribute to the station’s profile.

Distinction
from commercial
stations

“Music and the handling of music, or the programming of music, probably count as one of the biggest differences among community radio stations” (Helga Schwarzwald, Verband Freier Rundfunk Österreich).

Music as a distinguishing factor also plays a role in how community radio stations can collaborate in terms of music (see Collaboration and Networking, p. 48).

Another characteristic of community radio is that music programmes often involve extensive expert knowledge of specific musical genres, styles, and artists. Music editors in community radio have contextual knowledge of the sources and backgrounds of music, which is rarely found in commercial radio.

PROMOTION OF STRUCTURALLY UNDERREPRESENTED MUSIC, NEWCOMERS, AND LOCAL MUSIC

The term “underrepresented music” was not only critically discussed in several interviews and focus groups but was also a significant topic of debate within the research team. Our classification is found on page 11. What “underrepresented” means can depend on a variety of factors.

What does
“underrepresented”
mean?

“For me, that’s not a very meaningful term by itself. It is clear that a lot of music is not represented. But whether it should be better represented or not is really a policy definition that the responsible people must consciously and actively make” (Helga Schwarzwald, Verband Freier Rundfunk Österreich).

Several interviews and focus groups noted that there is music that should not be represented, for example, because it contains explicit or discriminatory content, such as racist, homophobic, or otherwise harmful material, or is produced by people associated with such content. This shows that the question of what music is

considered underrepresented goes hand in hand with the normative question of: What music should be represented more, and what music should not be represented? To some extent, this is a question that each editorial team must answer for itself. The guidelines that individual community radio stations, as well as the Verband Freier Rundfunk Österreich, give themselves form the basis for such decisions:

"[Community radio broadcasters] actively work against discrimination based on gender, sexuality, social or ethnic origin, religion, skin colour, physical or mental abilities, language, or age" (Charter of Community Broadcasting Austria).

Which music should be promoted particularly?

Community Radios and their role in supporting underrepresented music and music of newcomers

In broadcasting practice, these decisions are often implicit or dependent on the individual. Therefore, they are directly linked to the question of who in the community radio station can make such structural and content-related decisions. The discussion reveals that the evaluation can often be complex and context dependent.

Overall, the analysis shows that the promotion of underrepresented music and musicians is an important function and role of community radio, even though the implementation of this commitment follows specific focal points depending on the station.

It is also evident from the interviews and focus groups that a key function of community radio is to offer a platform to newcomers, as they often only gain airplay through community radio. Promoting local music is not only seen as the responsibility of community radio but also as an important part of their profile and cultural contribution.

"We need to actually dare and pay more attention to our local artists. We hold the keys to promote them. Once we push out these local artists, effectively they all start coming. Now my inbox is getting full with people who want to come to the radio and [want to do an interview]. It's good" (Focus Group 2).

The discussions highlight several aspects that describe the role of music in community radio and the expectations associated with it:

- » Music that gets little or no airtime in commercial and public-service media – e.g. by newcomers, local artists,

Own standards

structurally disadvantaged groups or people, or experimental sounds.

- » This also aligns with the responsibility that community radio stations see themselves having: counteracting societal dynamics that disadvantage musicians with a migration background, FLINTA, non-German or non-English music, etc.
- » Music that comes from the local or regional scene and is underrepresented in broader media.

The promotion of “underrepresented” music raises additional questions and open topics:

Further questions

- » Who is responsible for promoting musical diversity or supporting underrepresented music and musicians in community radio? Who defines and curates this? What forms of participation exist in these processes?
- » How are musicians currently paid for the music played? Should community radio stations also contribute to the financial compensation of newcomers, local musicians, and underrepresented artists through royalties? Discussions show that the issue of underrepresented music is often linked to the question of royalties (see Legal Framework & Royalties, p. 46).

CASE STUDIES ON COMMUNITY RADIO IN AUSTRIA

RADIO ORANGE 94.0, VIENNA

At ORANGE 94.0, the responsible music editor has a minor employment position and has been curating the unmoderated music programme between regular radio shows for ten years. Music finds its way onto the radio through two main channels: firstly, via the music database, which is continually updated by the editor, and secondly, through the contributions of over 500 radio hosts, who play music during their respective shows.

Together, these two sources shape the station's musical identity. A central focus is placed on diversity in genres, artists, and formats.

“I think Orange has created something truly unique through the way the music editor has curated and maintained the

music database over the past ten years, particularly in cultivating a distinct sound identity” (Helga Schwarzwald, Verband Freier Rundfunk Österreich).

The music pool of ORANGE 94.0 is being perceived as “characteristic” for the station’s identity, “instead of playing mainstream music, the focus is on alternative underground and independent stuff, especially coming from the local music scene” (Team interview ORANGE 94.0). This perception is also reflected in the view that ORANGE 94.0 has, from the very beginning, dedicated itself to showcasing local Austrian music through specific programmes as well as the unmoderated music programme, thereby making an important contribution to increasing the visibility of the Austrian music scene. Additionally, music in languages other than English or German is featured in the unmoderated music programme, which is regarded as very positive. However, the discussion also highlights a desire for even greater linguistic diversity. The impact of music in various languages becomes evident in the following ways:

Sometimes I hear something from a completely different cultural background that I happen to know, and I’m like, ‘Wow, that’s playing on ORANGE! Someone else knows it.’ I think that’s amazing.” (Team interview, ORANGE 94.0)

Access to the music archive

Currently, radio hosts do not have access to the music archive, nor can they add music to it. Based on the initiative of some radio hosts, server space with a number of folders organised in genres and topics has been introduced where radio hosts can make their music accessible to others.

RADIO HELSINKI, GRAZ

Interview Manfred Kinzer, Programme Coordinator, Radio Helsinki

Radio Helsinki is the community radio station in Graz and has been operating since 1995. A particular focus is placed on the music programme, with music curated by both the programme coordination team and volunteer radio hosts. There is less distinction here between the radio’s music archive and the music sources used by radio hosts: the archive at Radio Helsinki is fed by around 80 music pools, which are compiled by various volunteer radio hosts and can be selected for the unmoderated

music programme. Each pool consists of 100 to 1,000 songs, typically assembled according to the preferences and focus of the curator, such as a particular theme or the focus of a specific programme. Pools may centre around a specific genre, region, or language, or include a wide variety of music. Playback has been managed for around 15 years through an automated, open-source-based system, which allows specific pools to be assigned to designated programme slots. During these slots, music from the respective pool is played randomly, with the only criterion being that the same artist cannot appear consecutively. One challenge mentioned during the interview regarding this system is the limited ability to curate music due to the automated rotation. Since some music pools are quite large and only one automation criterion exists, it can take several months for a newly added song to be played for the first time. In addition to the music pools, there is also an archive, which includes promotional records and is accessible to all radio hosts.

Through an informal process, individual radio hosts are invited to make their music pools available or to curate a music pool. The archive is open to all radio hosts.

Access to the
music archive

FREIES RADIO OBERÖSTERREICH (FRO), LINZ

Interview with Vera Ecser, Programme Coordinator, and Petra Moser, Music Editor, FRO

FRO strongly identifies itself through its music programme and positions itself as an alternative broadcaster: „*We definitely try to cover a niche programme. More alternative than the alternative, so to speak*“ (FRO). The music programme is curated by a music editor, with personal preferences playing a significant role in shaping the selection: „*I definitely rely heavily on my own tastes*“ (FRO).

FRO does not define its distinct identity through a specific genre or musical style but rather through a deliberate distinction from the mainstream. This includes allowing for abrupt transitions between tracks. At the same time, the station places a stronger emphasis on electronic music and experimental styles of jazz and avant-garde.

The focus on its music programme highlights the importance of a local and regional connection to the music scene in Linz and Upper Austria. FRO sees itself as a platform for local music and musicians and is also perceived as such by the regional

music community. This became evident during one of the focus groups: „*To me, it seems that FRO [compared to ORANGE 94.0 in Vienna] is much closer to communities and the cultural scene. It also has a strong connection to the Art University in Linz*“ (Focus Group 3).

Unlike other radio stations, FRO does not use any form of automation for its music playback. The FRO music archive is a collection stored locally on a hard drive, where tracks are organised in a simple folder structure. Playlists are manually compiled from the archive and can then be scheduled and played during the programme.

Access to the music archive

Radio hosts can theoretically use the local archive of FRO and have access to the entire music collection, but in practice, this is rather rare, as radio hosts often have their own music or access to other platforms, etc. The music archive is based on a conventional folder structure and is not stored in a database. Searching by keywords, as many are accustomed to with streaming services, is therefore not possible.

FREIES RADIO SALZKAMMERGUT (FRS)

Interview with Julia Müllegger, Management, and Andrea Csi-ki-Keil, Music Editor, FRS

Free Radio Salzkammergut locates its music profile outside of the mainstream, focusing not only on alternative music or international artists but also on the representation of local music: “*Simply this awareness of inviting local musicians and engaging with them, giving them a platform*” (FRS). Interestingly, compared to other radio stations where typically one or a few people bear primary responsibility for music, all full-time team members are involved in music curation. The programming is managed through a commercial broadcasting system, which also includes a music database. Playlists can be assembled through this system. Each team member is assigned a specific period during which they are responsible for the music played. There is a set number of playlists per day that the responsible person can update and add to. Used playlists are reloaded into the programme after several weeks and adjusted again. “*De facto, everyone on our team truly shapes the music profile because everyone engages with the music database. There is no one-sidedness; instead, it reflects the diversity within the team*” (FRS).

Everyone on the team is involved in music curation. Radio hosts also contribute to the database, but it is used less frequently for programme production.

Access to the
music archive

USE OF MUSIC

KNOWLEDGE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE USE OF MUSIC IN COMMUNITY RADIO

The analysis shows that there is a need to strengthen knowledge about the use of music in community radio among radio hosts. Additionally, some musicians lack knowledge about how to get their music on the radio and how the royalty system works in Austria.

Knowledge needs for (primarily) radio hosts include:

- » From which sources is music allowed to be played on community radio? „*This is a lot about Spotify, YouTube, etc. Some were completely unclear about what is allowed and what isn't. I think there's a lot of knowledge gaps here.*“ (Focus group 1)
- » What copyright restrictions apply, when, and how? What counts as advertising in community radio under what circumstances?
- » The basic training for radio hosts is often seen as insufficient to establish practical knowledge about the use of music in community radio. Furthermore, more experienced radio hosts have pointed out that legal situations can change, and thus, regular updates on legal knowledge for music use would be useful.

Knowledge gaps in the music scene:

- » In the focus group for the music scene, knowledge gaps were identified among musicians, whose closure could significantly contribute to supporting newcomers and the local music scene: “*Just the knowledge that mica exists, who take the time to talk to artists. These are the kinds of things that are simply missing in the scene*” (Focus group 3).
- » The perspective of young musicians shows that practical knowledge about the music industry in Austria

could be improved in education: *“There’s a lack of basic musical education on how to enter the industry. The practical stuff, like how to register with AKM, is missing”* (Focus group 3).

- » Musicians often don’t know that community radio is an accessible option for airplay or how to get their music played on community stations.

MUSIC SOURCES: WHERE DOES THE MUSIC IN COMMUNITY RADIO COME FROM?

Overall, it is not surprising that music in community radios comes from a variety of different sources. Within community radios, there are often separate structures between radio hosts and the station’s own unmoderated music programming.

Music collections of radio hosts

Many music-specialised radio hosts have their own music collections or archives and also have access to specific music sources. These include, for example, direct access to concerts, collaborations with labels and event organisers, or personal contacts with musicians and DJs who share their music or are invited to the studio. Established radio programmes also receive music directly from labels or musicians. All of these aspects highlight how central individual people with their own networks, expertise, and specialisms are for the music in community radios.

Radio hosts without direct access to the music scene or communities use commercial platforms such as Spotify or alternative platforms with Creative Commons licenses. Overall, there is more uncertainty among radio hosts without specific access regarding the use of music or music sources.

Music sources

Music played in the unmoderated music programme usually comes from a combination of different sources. These include physical archives (vinyl records, CDs, etc.), digitised archives, as well as commercially available or open-source databases. Own radio archives are often fed by digitised physical databases, privately provided archives, music pools or playlists from radio hosts, submissions from artists or labels, and relevant music from promotional databases provided by editors. Most stations also have collaborations with event organisers and festivals, from which live broadcasts are organised.

Despite the large variety of sources, the question of where community radios get their music remains a challenge. This includes, for example, promotional samples of music and the search for music, which often lacks resources and editorial capacity. The systematic integration of music into archive or database structures is also a question of resources. Inconsistent structures or data loss over the years can make accessibility more difficult.

In discussions, pooling the resources of community radios was repeatedly mentioned as potential for music sources. At the same time, there is some concern that through a shared structuring or collection, differences in the individual profiles of the radios could be levelled, or their unique “sound” might become diluted.

The question of how to optimise the provision of music promotion material for community radios is a key aspect of supporting musicians and fostering collaboration between radios and the music scene. Discussions in the focus groups highlighted a need for more structured and transparent submission options for musicians.

Processing submitted music is a crucial aspect of curatorial work. However, the conversations revealed that the sheer volume of tracks received through music promotion, combined with the unstructured manner in which music is submitted, frequently overwhelms the capacity of music editors – not only in community radios but also in public broadcasting.

Overall, it appears that explicit selection criteria for music in community radios are rarely formulated. Instead, the selection and curation are closely tied to the individuals making the choices and their personal preferences. In this sense, the understanding of „music quality“ is subjective, encompassing various approaches that, in turn, contribute to diversity.

Unlike commercial radios, listener behaviour plays little to no role in shaping the unmoderated music programmes of community radios. Only a few stations prioritise music by listening habits, allocating it to different times of day and night, while many do not apply such prioritisation and even promote “challenging listening.” A common thread among all radios is that curation takes place, and community radios are not seen as open channels for arbitrary music. Specific content-related criteria apply, with stations taking care not to play racist, homophobic, or discriminatory content.

Promotional music
for radios

Selection
criteria

“As long as it’s not offensive, the music has its place in my show” (Focus Group 1).

This raises important questions: Who has the authority to interpret and decide what is deemed inappropriate? What is the specific musical context? Are certain terms reclaimed expressions used in an empowering context? Who possesses the curatorial skills, and what knowledge is necessary for this work? While there is a desire for greater transparency in criteria, there is also concern that rigid or static criteria could overly constrain community radios. The discussion indicates that music criteria should be continually negotiated in dialogic processes.

Music search

The analysis shows that music search is highly dependent on the music expertise and access to sources available to the individual, as well as whether music is central to the programme or serves as thematic background. For radio hosts without a music focus, music search often presents a challenge. The following search criteria were identified in interviews and discussions:

- » By title (the most explicit search criterion)
- » By artist (requires prior knowledge of specific musicians)
- » By themes (commonly used for thematic background, but a challenging criterion since metadata typically does not include this information)
- » By language or region (frequently used in specific programmes)
- » By instrumentation (e.g. when looking for music from a particular region or genre)
- » By mood (streaming platforms often provide search options based on moods or vibes)
- » By identity (e.g. music by FLINTA, BIPOC artists; difficult to achieve with available metadata)
- » By track length (a rare criterion, typically used in combination with others)

REQUIREMENTS FOR A MUSIC DATABASE FOR COMMUNITY RADIO AND ITS DESIGN

ORANGE 94.0's
music database

The analysed conversations and discussions reveal a recurring ambiguity about when the term “database” is used versus “archive” and what differentiates the two. These terms are often used interchangeably in various statements. For the purpose of this analysis, we have provided working definitions in the introduction, see p. 10.

The music database at ORANGE 94.0 has evolved over time and contains music tracks from various sources: digitised physical archives of the station, music submitted by artists or labels, and tracks researched independently. Currently, the database holds approximately 17,000 files, although accurately assessing its size is complicated by “archive deadwood” –files rendered unplayable due to past data losses or lacking metadata.

The database itself is relatively simple, described as “basically a web browser”, and is accessible only to the music editor. Radio hosts do not have access to the database, and music from their programmes is not added to it. The desire for access to the database was expressed clearly in discussions, as was the inclination to replace the current system rather than overhaul it, while preserving its content in an archive:

“From my perspective, the current solution is technically outdated and quite rudimentary. However, the database holds significant value. All the metadata and the organisational effort that the music editor has undoubtedly built up painstakingly over time are worth preserving” (Team interview, ORANGE 94.0).

The track service does not appear automatically in the web player but can be accessed via a dedicated menu item on the ORANGE 94.0 website. Currently, it only provides information about the unmoderated music programme. Details about the music played in individual programmes are not available through this service. Discussions highlighted the desire for an improved and more easily accessible track service.

Track service

SRUCTURAL NEEDS AND REQUIREMENTS

The focus groups revealed the need to make the curation process more open, participatory, and representative in designing

Editorial competencies, participation, and representation

a database for community radio (specifically ORANGE 94.0, although the discussion often took a broader scope):

“The fundamental idea is that music curation should be more community-based” (Focus Group 3).

While the expertise and curation of the current music editor are highly valued and considered essential for maintaining the distinct “ORANGE 94.0 sound”, the discussions highlighted the necessity of involving more people to ensure broader representation of diverse perspectives.

“I think the first step is to make a team of people who are in charge of the database. I think who this team will be has to be a reflection of this consensus that the radio itself has. With all of its radio presenters and listeners and the stakes that you have in the communities that you are involved with” (Focus Group 2).

Opening up the music editorial process raises further structural and organisational questions: What competencies are required to participate in curation? Is specific music knowledge a prerequisite? How can participation be implemented practically and made straightforward? Should shared criteria or a common understanding of music quality be established? These questions are closely tied to selection criteria and the issue of metadata, as well as the database's functions and interface.

“I imagine a scenario where people come together, give ratings, and perhaps rotate annually, suggesting new people to ensure turnover” (Focus Group 3).

Another question stemming from this approach is: Who curates the curators? To address this, participatory and representative processes were suggested to maintain transparency and clarity regarding how the database is managed and curated. *“I think it would be great if it were a rotating curatorium. Otherwise, it risks becoming a gatekeeper function” (Focus Group 3).*

Various ideas and suggestions about participation were raised in interviews and focus groups:

- » A rotating curatorium of radio presenters, musicians, event organisers, etc., for a fixed term
- » Thematic curatoriums dedicated to specific topics or themes, compiling playlists accordingly
- » A working group that collaboratively discusses, establishes, and updates indexing and metadata

An existing example of collective curation is Free Radio Salzkammergut, where the entire team participates in music curation during assigned responsibility periods.

In addition to participation in the curation of a music database, there is also a desire for access to it in order to facilitate the use of music, particularly for presenters without specific musical knowledge or their own music sources. A distinction needs to be made between active and passive access: Active access refers to presenters wishing to contribute their own music to the database, for example, through an upload function. Passive access primarily concerns the ability to download music from the database for use in shows. Opening up access to a music database would require consideration of various technical and legal aspects; however, according to the experts consulted, access is feasible both technically and legally under different models.

Access to the
music database

The analysis also reveals various needs for an open database. It is assumed that according solutions would determine how frequently the access would actually be used:

Additional wishes
and needs for a
music database

- » External access (online access from anywhere)
- » Simple, user-friendly interface and search function
- » Search functionality by mood and theme, particularly for use in live shows
- » Information about licenses of music tracks, e.g., Creative Commons music
- » Tracking the use of individual songs, e.g., how often a track has been played/downloaded (to allow targeted selection of less frequently used music)
- » Availability of entire playlists (thematically, by genre, or show focus)
- » A network function: Rating and comment features within the database, as well as sharing functions with other users.

METADATA AND INDEXING

Current practices reveal various approaches to indexing music. At ORANGE 94.0, the database automatically extracts metadata from files during upload, and additional categories, such as genres, are selected from a catalogue. In contrast, at Radio Helsinki and Freies Radio Salzkammergut, keywords are freely assigned. Currently, the following data are primarily recorded:

Automated and
freely assigned
indexing

artist, title, release year. Additionally, information such as album, copyright holder, label, and length is sometimes included, as well as whether the music was produced in Austria. Similar to the needs for music search (see p. 40), the following categories are also considered relevant: themes, mood, region, and possibly identity (e.g. FLINTA), and newcomer status. There was also mention of the need to temporalise thematic tags to make the context of indexing comprehensible. Ideally, keywords should be assigned in a participatory setting to include different perspectives and contextual knowledge.

Moreover, there are a variety of technical solutions using Artificial Intelligence and audio analysis that can assist with indexing, such as analysing and tagging lyrics thematically. However, these solutions come with their own set of challenges.

TECHNICAL ASPECTS

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF AUTOMATION

Automation is closely tied to the curation of a music database. The study reveals a tension between individualised and unique curation in community radios and the technological potential of automation. On one hand, many radios and producers emphasise that it is the curation by passionate individuals that makes community radios a distinctive musical experience: *“We want to offer something that stands out or sounds a little peculiar. And I think a machine can’t do that; only humans can”* (Freies Radio Salzburg).

This sentiment is echoed by other community radios: *“We have experimented with automation in the past and we are moving away from that. We are much more focused on the idea that everything is live, human, and real-time”* (Ken Freedman, WFMU, USA).

Human curation as
distinction from
algorithms

Human curation is seen as a vital distinction from streaming services. Additionally, there are concerns that artificial intelligence (AI) and algorithms could exacerbate biases, contradicting the principle of diversity. *“I believe the idea of a curated process, even though it’s very labor-intensive, is the only way to combat algorithmic madness. Musicians already have to contend with the*

Instagram algorithm, the TikTok algorithm, the Spotify algorithm, and the constant fight for attention" (Focus Group 3).

Concerns are raised that AI, due to inherent biases and a lack of contextual and sociopolitical awareness, might tag music inaccurately or in problematic ways.

On the other hand, some see the opportunities of AI and automation as valuable tools to ease the workload of community radios. Many radios already use automated processes to varying extents, such as simple systems for randomly selecting music for unmoderated programmes. According to AI expert Thomas Lidy, current technological advancements could optimise certain processes while preserving the unique characteristics of individual radios. These include AI-driven solutions for audio analysis and indexing, which can detect genres, moods, themes, or lyrical content. Lidy suggests that technological tools could complement human expertise and nuanced contextual knowledge: *"In my view, it is technically possible to bring together all these aspects – human experts, community-generated keywords, and technical solutions" (Thomas Lidy, AI expert in music analysis).*

AI-based audio
analysis

Overall, the findings indicate that community radios place great importance on human input. The work of a music editorial team plays a critical curatorial role that streaming services cannot replicate. While AI and automation can serve as tools to simplify and support processes, they require critical reflection and careful integration to align with the values of community radios.

SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS

Discussions revealed that while the current database at ORANGE 94.0 and its data content are considered valuable, a new database is preferred for the future. An initial survey identified numerous software options already available on the market that could meet the outlined requirements. These include both open-source and commercial options, which would need to be evaluated further based on the needs identified in the study and potential funding opportunities.

Old datasets and
new software

According to the interviewed experts, accessing a future database and establishing various levels of access would be technically feasible and relatively straightforward to implement. The greatest challenge for new software solutions would be migrat-

ing data from the current structures to a new database without any data loss.

Requested functions

INTERFACE AND FEATURES

Insights from the interviews and focus groups highlighted a range of needs regarding the interface and functionality of a database or related features on the radio station's website:

- » A frequently mentioned function of a database is the tracking of songs, e.g. by frequency of downloads. This function could support curation, for example, by sharing particularly popular tracks or actively highlighting less-played music. Furthermore, the discussions indicate that there is an expectation that tracking could simplify royalty payments to artists. However, more factors play a role here (more on royalties, p. 46). Moreover, tracking within a database can initially only document its usage and not the actual payout on the radio.
- » Another frequently mentioned feature is the establishment of a more comprehensive public track service that displays which song is currently playing. There are repeated references to the music played in specific programme series, for which there is currently no track service. This raises the question of how such music could be included in the future.
- » In addition to a search function that can be used easily during live broadcasts, there is a clear desire for interactive features. These include functions that allow interaction with listeners, such as the possibility of liking music in the track service, as well as interactive features within the database, such as rating, sharing, and commenting functions.
- » A challenge that must be considered is the availability of the interface in multiple languages. Can it be used in different languages, and can different alphabets be displayed?

LEGAL ASSESSMENT

There is considerable uncertainty about the legal framework governing the use of music in community radio, particularly concerning which music can be broadcast and under what conditions. While this uncertainty partly stems from insufficient (or insufficiently utilised) knowledge dissemination, interviews with legal experts in this field reveal that the legal situation is complex, and interpretations vary. Changes in copyright and exploitation rights, driven by new technological developments, have further complicated this landscape. Consequently, legal assessments should not be regarded as definitive evaluations.

- » Providing radio hosts access to a shared database would likely be legally unproblematic; however, clear rules on usage and due diligence should be established and documented in an agreement for programme production.
- » Raising awareness and offering up-to-date training for radio hosts in community radio on copyright issues is recommended (and has been expressed as a need by radio hosts).
- » Technical measures, such as watermarking or usage tracking, could be implemented to protect music tracks from unauthorised use.
- » A shared database across multiple community radio stations should be reviewed with collecting societies to ensure compliance with existing contracts.

Legal Guidance

Interview with Walter Strobl, Copyright Law Expert

ROYALTIES

Discussions surrounding a shared database and music in community radio often touched on the issue of royalties, specifically the financial compensation of artists for music played on the radio. Community radio stations operate under blanket agreements with collecting societies, through which royalties are distributed to musicians (see Info & Facts, p. 23). Currently, due to these agreements, individual radio stations do not report specific tracks played, the distribution method is controlled solely by the collecting societies. Community radio stations have no direct insight into or influence over the details of these payments.

Financial compensation for music played on air

Reporting of individual tracks

A complex discussion influenced by differing interests

The discussions revealed a range of assumptions about how royalties are distributed, many of which cannot be verified. A recurring concern was the need to better support precariously positioned and underrepresented artists, including financially. This issue was identified as one that a new database should address. For instance, the desire for enhanced tracking of played music was linked to the assumption that this could facilitate precise reporting of individual tracks to collecting societies for royalty distribution, with the expectation that this would result in increased payments to underrepresented artists. However, it became clear that the issue is complex and influenced by differing interests. Key questions were raised about the frequency with which specific tracks are played, given the broad musical diversity of community radio (as opposed to the limited playlists of commercial stations), and what financial benefit this might bring to musicians. A listing of tracks, however, would at least ensure that artists are included in the royalty pools covered by blanket agreements.

Conversely, questions arose about the resources available to community radio stations to enable precise reporting of individual tracks or even a sampling method, such as the one used in the United States (see the example of WFMU, p. 50). Collecting societies also appear to have limited interest in the additional administrative effort required for such detailed reporting. Another complicating factor is reach, a key determinant of royalty payments for commercial stations. It is assumed that the (currently unrecorded) reach of community radio stations is not comparable to that of commercial stations.

Overall, the discussions underscored that differing assumptions, interests, and levels of knowledge heavily influence debates on royalties. While the complex legal framework surrounding this issue cannot be resolved solely through database functions, various forms of support for underrepresented musicians remain a central goal for any future database.

COLLABORATION AND NETWORKING

A recurring theme that also highlights tensions is the question of collaboration among community radio stations regarding the use of music and a shared database. On one hand, community radio stations face the common challenge of accessing the music they wish to play. On the other hand, it is evident that community radios are highly individualistic, perceiving their working methods and profiles as highly specific. There is thus a concern that collaboration might dilute their unique positioning.

Unique
positioning...

“For me, the question mark is always how to preserve the diversity of the radios without imposing something additional that everyone has to conform to” (Freies Radio Salzkammergut).

Given the limited resources available to community radios, discussions revealed that pooling resources for shared infrastructure, music sources, or cultural-political work appears at least partially sensible. The study shows that collaboration is generally welcomed if it can be made efficient and not overly resource intensive. Potential areas of collaboration include:

... vs. pooling
of resources

- » Sourcing music and coordinating music sources, such as jointly approaching labels
- » Sharing directories or exchanging music
- » Purely technical collaboration, e.g. leveraging synergies in rotation systems, automation, etc
- » Sharing infrastructure, which would require further clarification through exchange within the Verband Freier Rundfunk Österreich (Austrian Association of Community Broadcasting)

Regarding a shared database, however, concerns dominate. Many worry that such a database might not be compatible with existing workflows or could be technically challenging to integrate. Some radios envision a shared database as a parallel structure that would require additional maintenance alongside their existing systems, potentially adding to their workload when selecting suitable music for their specific needs. Often, there is fear of an unmanageable “data flood” or overly resource-intensive collaboration without meaningful benefits: *“I don’t think it would make work easier” (Freies Radio Oberösterreich)*. At the level of radio hosts who engage more intensively with music, there is already – for many years in some cases – a degree of music exchange within Austrian community radios and inter-

EU wide and within the radio

nationally. At the EU level, projects like Indie-Re have fostered deeper collaboration on music among community radios. Discussions in focus groups further revealed that collaboration is generally welcomed.

Opportunities to strengthen collaboration both within individual stations and between editorial teams were also identified. Such initiatives could improve exchanges about music, even independently of a shared database. Similarly, interviews and focus groups with representatives of the music scene and labels revealed that closer collaboration between radio stations and music labels would be welcomed and could bring significant advantages: *“I think what you do is quite good, but I think you can always expand inside the community by inviting more people to do programmes together”* (Mel, Label Manager, Tender Matter). International comparisons also provide examples of how other radios are already collaborating with labels or music communities, offering insights and inspiration for potential initiatives.

COMMUNITY RADIOS IN INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON

Different terms - similar challenges

An international comparison reveals that the models of independent or community radio stations are highly individual and context-dependent, with working methods, structures, and self-perceptions varying from one station to another. This variation begins with fundamental questions such as what defines a free/independent/non-commercial or community radio, which term is used, and how “community” is defined by each station. Differences can be seen, for example, in the “generations” of radios or whether they are more rooted in the digital sphere or the local context. Despite this individuality, similar cultural and political frameworks and challenges emerge in international comparisons, including:

- » Funding and independent sustainability, often reliant on national support structures, particularly in the face of threats to media diversity, as observed in examples like Hungary.
- » Copyright issues, including the use of music and royalty payments.
- » Positioning in relation to streaming services, automation, and Artificial Intelligence.

Collaboration within transnational, Europe-wide, and international networks is seen as valuable and worth expanding by the interviewed radios and networks. Such cooperation strengthens the significant role of community radios in promoting cultural and media diversity.

WFMU AND THE EXAMPLE OF THE FREE MUSIC ARCHIVE

Case studies and learnings

Interview with Ken Freedman, WFMU

WFMU-FM, a non-commercial radio station in New Jersey, USA, describes its profile as “adventurous and experimental”. A defining characteristic of WFMU is its strong focus on live radio curated in real time by individuals in the studio:

USA

“We are dedicated to live radio with a human being on air, making their decisions in real time” (Ken Freedman).

This approach is a deliberate stance against increasing automation, placing DJs at the centre of programming, which they are free to shape according to their vision.

Similar to the situation in Austria, WFMU pays a blanket fee to performing rights organisations. However, the station is also required to provide a “sample period” of music reporting four times a year, each lasting two weeks. This sample-based reporting leads, in some cases, to higher royalty distributions for frequently played artists. However, documenting played music and developing the necessary software are resource-intensive processes.

A particularly notable case study from WFMU's history is the Free Music Archive (FMA), which exemplifies the station's efforts to make music more accessible to community radios while bypassing performing rights organisations. Founded around 2004, WFMU operated this royalty-free music platform for several years before the costs of maintaining it became unsustainable, leading to its sale. The FMA illustrates both the potential of using archive or database infrastructures to make royalty-free music available and the significant strain such initiatives can place on the resources of community radio stations.

NEAR FM AND THE SOCIAL BENEFIT FRAMEWORK

Interview Near FM

Ireland

Near FM is part of an independent media cooperative and is based as a community radio station in North Dublin. It operates similarly to community radios in Austria, with a focus on the involvement of radio hosts who curate their own shows. While the Community Radio Charter in Ireland mandates a minimum of 20% "Irish" music, Near FM places particular emphasis on playing local music, as well as music from newcomers and marginalised groups such as FLINTA (female, lesbian, intersex, non-binary, transgender, and agender people), *"because that can often disappear"* (Ciarán Murray, Near FM).

An interesting social-political tool in Ireland, in which representatives from Near FM have been involved, is the Social Benefits Framework. This model describes how community media create social benefits for their communities by improving quality of life through development, empowerment, and well-being. Linked to the idea of social benefits is a funding pool sourced from broadcast license fees. To access these funds, community media must demonstrate the social projects and services they provide:

"It's quite broad, how you interpret social benefit. A lot of it is based around community information, citizen rights information, training projects, or working to give young people, women, or ethnic voices a platform on radio. But I do feel we probably overlooked the cultural side a bit" (Ciarán Murray, Near FM).

While the Social Benefits Framework is already considered a good practice for supporting community radios, the interview highlights that explicitly incorporating arts and culture into the framework would be beneficial in the future.

CASHMERE RADIO AND THE INVOLVEMENT OF MUSIC COMMUNITIES

Interview Cashmere Radio

Berlin

Cashmere Radio is an experimental community radio station based in Berlin, organised as an association with a tiered membership structure. The station primarily operates as an internet radio station and is entirely curated and run by its members.

Anyone who wants to have a show must be an active member of the association and contribute to the overall operation of the radio station in addition to their own programme. Not only individuals but also labels or other associations can become members. Currently, the station broadcasts about 100 shows per month with approximately 140 active members, who are located around the world.

To make the diversity of shows, music, and content accessible, the website features a discovery function that allows users to combine various search criteria such as format, genre, and mood. In addition to supporting artists directly from various music communities, Cashmere Radio also releases its own albums or makes studio recordings available to artists for their own releases:

“We have very good equipment and give the individual tracks to the artists. Then they might be able to make an album out of them, because these are very good recordings” (Cashmere Radio). This example illustrates how radios and artists can support each other.

CIVIL RÁDIÓ AND EUROPEAN NETWORKING IN THE FACE OF RESTRICTIONS ON PRESS FREEDOM

Interview Civil Rádió

Civil Rádió is a community radio based in Budapest, and it remains one of the few independent radio stations still operating in Hungary. Since the rise to power of Viktor Orbán and his Fidesz party in 2010, Hungary has faced increasing restrictions on press freedom. In 2024, Hungary ranks 67th on the Press Freedom Index (Reporters Without Borders). The interview highlights the significant impact this has had on the independent media landscape, and consequently on community radios:

Hungary

“We had a really huge community radio movement in the country, I think around 80 radios operated in this really small area. Because of the political situation and the situation of freedom of the press, now it’s only four or five” (Civil Rádió).

In particular, networking with other community radios and advocacy groups in Europe is crucial for Civil Rádió. This includes advocacy and support through networks such as the Communi-

ty Media Forum Europe (CMFE), in which representatives from the radio station are actively involved.

The interview also reveals how important the exchange between community radios in Europe can be for the promotion of music. The pan-European project Indie-Re is mentioned as an example of how collaboration between different radio stations can help promote local music beyond its immediate scene.

NETWORKS OF COMMUNITY RADIOS AND MEDIA

The example of Hungary especially highlights the importance of networking between independent media in Europe for advocacy. Several interviews with various advocacy groups across Europe reveal a significant need for such networking to strengthen independent media across the continent. Overall, it is evident that community radios remain, and even increasingly are, an important medium:

“The demand and interest in community radio as a form of creative expression is definitely on the rise” (Interview Reset!/ICRN).

However, there is often a lack of appropriate support for this medium: *“If we want community radios to still be independent, there is a need for better support from public authorities” (Interview Reset!/ICRN).* In this context, Reset! calls for the recognition and support of independent community radios as one of the five key points in its policy recommendations for the independent cultural and media sector in Europe.

A selection of networks of independent media in Europe

Community Media Forum Europe

CMFE aims to provide both training and advocacy for community radios across Europe. “The community radio sector is in huge danger in Hungary, in Serbia, in North Macedonia...”

„It’s always a fight to keep the radio alive. And CMFE in that case is a great tool to raise a voice, to raise the problem” (Interview Civil Rádío).

Reset!

Reset! is a European network founded by the French organisation Arty Farty, with the goal of bringing together and supporting independent cultural and media organisations in Europe. Its work is based on three pillars: 1. Empowering its members, 2. Documenting the status quo of the independent sector in Europe, and 3. Advocacy and policy recommendations.

ICRN started as a grassroots network born out of the need for community radios in the Baltic states and Finland to come together:

International
Community Radio
Network

"The process represented the need to connect with one another, especially in these small countries where it needs those connections on a political and social level" (Interview ICRN). The network is also part of Reset!.



RECOMMENDED

RECOMMENDATIONS & PERSPECTIVES

COMMUNITY RADIO AND THE LOCAL MUSIC SCENE: STRENGTHENING INTERFACES AND SYNERGIES

- » *Where else but on community radio can local music find a platform?* Achieving this requires close collaboration with the local music scene. Labels, event organisers, musicians, and community radio stations can strengthen these connections and establish interfaces to contribute collectively to the promotion of underrepresented music.
- » Establishing *structures for providing community radio with promotional material*, such as coordination among small Austrian labels and music editors, would be beneficial.
- » Community radio provides airplay but has limited means to support music financially. A partnership between radio stations and other important actors in Austria's music scene, such as mica – music austria and music interest groups, could generate *solutions for royalty payments* focused on supporting local and underrepresented music.
- » *Reciprocal support* between community radio and musicians, labels, and event organisers could extend beyond the radio programme to include studio recordings, compilations, live broadcasts, and jointly organised concerts.
- » Providing *information on how music finds its way onto community radio* should be tailored according to the needs of radio hosts and addressed by music educators.

MUSIC IN COMMUNITY RADIO: FACILITATING DIVERSITY AND PARTICIPATION

- » Representation begins with *the person curating the music selection*. Promoting underrepresented music calls for opening curatorial processes and expanding participation. Ideas include *participatory*

curatorial committees or broadening the roles within existing music editorial teams.

- » *Documenting programme content*, e.g. through playlists, could reveal which voices may be underrepresented.
- » Music selection criteria are subjective and context-dependent, constantly needing to adapt to musical trends. Each radio station's musical identity could be outlined in a *curatorial manifesto*, helping to maintain and refine station profiles while providing a foundation for evolving processes of music selection.
- » Inclusive curation requires participatory processes, *space for diverse perspectives*, and constant *exchange about music and its context*.
- » Community radios serve as *knowledge hubs for music*. Creating spaces to exchange and connect could help make the specialised expertise of many music editorial teams more accessible to other radio hosts.
- » Strengthening listeners' and the music community's connection to the station could be achieved by offering more ways to interact and *respond to the music programming*.

MUSIC DATABASES IN COMMUNITY

RADIO: MAKING MUSIC ACCESSIBLE

- » Music databases are vital tools for promoting underrepresented music. A database can *make curated music pools accessible and usable*, thereby directly influencing the music selection.
- » Participatory structures in curating the database could also provide a basis for discussions around *indexing and cataloguing*.
- » *Different levels of access and music pools* could enhance clarity and user-friendliness in a future music database while allowing uploads from radio hosts, suggestions from the music scene, and even input from listeners.
- » *Establishing clear and structured paths for musicians* to share their music with radio stations should be incorporated into the database design.

- » Databases can help document the use of music on air, providing insights into focus areas and simplifying title tracking.

For technical requirements of a music database, this means:

- » Exploring new software solutions for management and indexing, ideally based on open-source systems.
- » For radio hosts, an intuitive interface with search, download, and online access capabilities is essential. A survey could assess detailed needs.
- » AI could simplify cataloguing and indexing processes, though a critical review of its mechanisms is essential.
- » Expanding existing track services to improve the traceability of played music titles, for example, on the stations' websites, would be beneficial. This could improve visibility and document the music across individual radio series.
- » Discussions within the community radio network should explore whether shared infrastructures in music management make sense and what options exist. Solutions should be easy to implement. For instance, resources should not be wasted on overly complex technical processes requiring excessive coordination.

ACCESS TO MUSIC: EXAMINING LEGAL ASPECTS

- » Granting radio hosts access to a music database for show production purposes seems legitimate from a legal point of view. However, clear usage regulations and a duty of care should be outlined in a broadcasting agreement.
- » Examining which technical measures are necessary to ensure that the music database is used solely for radio purposes is essential.
- » Expanded knowledge and updates on copyright issues can provide more legal security for music use on the radio. More corresponding training offers

are needed as well as the interest of radio hosts in these trainings.

- » The extent to which a *shared database among multiple community radios* would be covered by current agreements with copyright collecting societies should be evaluated if necessary.

COMMUNITY BUILDING: STRENGTHENING NETWORKING ON ALL LEVELS

- » Community radio stations do not only broadcast; they also provide *space for diverse groups of people to connect and meet*. Actors involved in community radio should thus be understood broadly, encompassing musicians and their communities. To this end, *self-organised networks*, particularly among DIY musicians, and direct exchange between radio hosts and the music scene have great potential.
- » An exchange between *community radio music editorial teams across Austria* could be a new level of networking.
- » Particularly in the music sector, *intergenerational exchanges* and mutual learning between traditional community radios and newer internet-based experimental platforms for music communities would be beneficial.
- » A united and supportive approach is crucial to highlight the importance of community radios, especially in light of *anti-democratic trends* in Europe.

MEDIA AND CULTURAL POLICY: ACKNOWLEDGING AND ENHANCING THE CONTRIBUTION OF COMMUNITY RADIOS

- » Community radios make a vital contribution to media diversity. They provide a platform for *multi-perspective, multilingual, and often marginalised voices*, promoting diversity of opinion, freedom of information, and local and transnational communities.
- » By offering airplay to local artists and musicians, community radios *support cultural diversity*, particularly by *representing socially marginalised individuals and groups*. Enhancing *inclusive curatorial structures* for music programming in community radios can be an effective tool to ensure this kind of visibility.
- » Content is largely volunteer based, with community radios bringing together diverse expertise and offering a crucial *space for civic engagement*.
- » The study aligns with the policy recommendation of the European network of independent media Reset!: the *media, social, and cultural contribution* of community radios must be recognised and elevated. This requires *medium-specific funding at the European level*, especially to counter anti-democratic trends and attacks on media diversity in Europe. Funding that fosters cooperation and mutual support among community radios is essential.
- » To better support the social contribution of community radios, models inspired by the *Irish Social Benefits Framework*, which demonstrates the positive impact of community media on social cohesion, should be further developed. This framework should be expanded to include cultural aspects and the role of community radios in arts and culture.

REIMAGINING THE MUSIC ARCHIVE OF COMMUNITY RADIO

At the outset of the study, there was a need to reflect on how music is managed at ORANGE 94.0. Three main objectives for the development of the music archive can be summarised as: Visibility, Accessibility, and Transparency.

VISIBILITY

- » The goal of enhancing the visibility and audibility of artists on the radio requires a multifaceted approach. On one level, radio hosts should try to document the music they play in their shows – through programme descriptions and playlists. On another level, strategically selected thematic focuses in the overall programming should highlight and bring visibility to connections within the diversity of music.
- » Formats could be expanded where music is featured both on air and off air, through live broadcasts, festival collaborations, events, compilations, and more – all while maintaining the core task of the radio station: the production of engaging radio content.
- » Visibility also works in the opposite direction: community radio sees itself as part of various sub- and alternative cultural scenes, striving to be recognised within these circles. Networking can help amplify mutual support and increase relevance.

Objectives:
Visibility,
Accessibility
and Transparency

ACCESSIBILITY

- » From an organisational standpoint, structures are needed to enable continuous dialogue and engagement with music as a theme. Participation does not mean open, unmoderated access – to foster true accessibility, it is necessary to balance and moderate varying levels of knowledge and resources.
- » It is important to be aware of language barriers and, where possible, reduce them – whether when using a user interface or when conveying knowledge about and discussing music.

- » On a technical level, it needs to be explored *how music can be contributed to the archive* and *how it can be made available* for use in radio shows.
- » Listeners should have access to information about the music played on the radio, and in the long term, *interactive forms of participation in shaping the music programme* might be established.

TRANSPARENCY

Filling a music archive involves making selections from an overwhelming number of music titles that are constantly being released. For this reason, it is helpful to have *criteria to guide decisions*, while maintaining openness. The music programme also follows the principles of community radio, which aims to counteract existing (media) power structures. The curation of the music programme seeks to implement these values.

- » In this context, curating means *intervening* and
- » *formulating* and discussing *criteria*,
- » *organising* and imparting *knowledge*, and
- » *making the decision-making process* for selection *transparent*.

It is evident that personal taste always plays a role, especially in music, and this should not be concealed behind the illusion of an objective selection process.

In terms of accessibility, *collective curation methods* and community-based labelling of content could be interesting avenues to explore.

A music archive, organised in a database, can lay the foundation for all these initiatives. It is clear that a future database will not be able to meet all the diverse needs. Therefore, alongside technical solutions, there must also be forums for interpersonal exchange. Existing structures, such as programme sections, radio host networks, or programme committees, can serve as starting points for this.

The results of the present study provide ORANGE 94.0 with a concrete foundation for future decisions in technical, content-related, and organisational areas. The study aims to provide other radio stations with ideas for reflecting on their own practices.

„I THINK THE FIRST STEP IS TO MAKE A TEAM OF PEOPLE WHO ARE IN CHARGE OF THE DATABASE. I THINK WHO THIS TEAM WILL BE HAS TO BE A REFLECTION OF THIS CONSENSUS THAT THE RADIO ITSELF HAS. WITH ALL OF ITS RADIO PRESENTERS AND LISTENERS AND THE STAKES THAT YOU HAVE IN THE COMMUNITIES, THAT YOU ARE INVOLVED WITH“ (FOKUSGRUPPE 2).



THANKS TO

ALL PARTICIPANTS

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* Some of the participants in the study have since changed their area of work, and many of them are active in multiple roles within the cultural and media field. The information provided here reflects the status as of the time of data collection in early summer and summer 2024, as well as the positions in which they were primarily surveyed and involved.

PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

EDUCULT is an independent research and consultancy institute focused on cultural and educational policy, based in the MuseumsQuartier in Vienna. Since 2003, we have been connecting culture, education, and politics in theory and practice, with an emphasis on dialogue, participation, proximity to stakeholders, and sustainable processes. The EDUCULT team brings together expertise and perspectives from diverse educational and professional backgrounds, including political and social sciences, arts, pedagogy, and cultural studies, all of which are continuously expanding.

<https://educult.at/>

EDUCULT

The Austrian Music Information Centre, mica – music austria, is the leading resource for information on contemporary Austrian music across all genres and a key point of contact for Austrian music creators and their economic environment. With service points in Vienna, Salzburg, and Tyrol, mica offers a wide range of free services, including career and legal advice, workshops, networking formats, and internationalisation initiatives, as well as online services such as a music magazine, music database, and extensive practical knowledge for self-help. The independent, non-profit organisation was founded in 1994 at the initiative of the Republic of Austria.

<https://www.musicaustria.at/>

mica - music
austria

ORANGE 94.0 is Vienna's first and only community radio station. Free of commercials, diverse, and sometimes quite eccentric – this is what it sounds like when 500 volunteer radio hosts create the programme. ORANGE 94.0 is a non-commercial radio station with a long history. Broadcasting on FM since 1998, it plays an important role in promoting media diversity in Austria. Today, around 200 different programmes are produced by groups and individuals from diverse social backgrounds, broadcasting in 17 different languages. The station is committed to solidarity and stands against discrimination. Music plays a central role in the station's programming, with music featured in more than half of the shows – from club culture to jazz piano, offering a platform for musicians from Vienna and all over the world.

<https://o94.at>

ORANGE 94.0

Radio has always been, and continues to be, an essential medium for sharing music. The music programming in community radio is shaped by the search for new sounds, diversity and the intent to make niche music accessible. Community radio aims to offer a platform for musicians and music that receive little to no airplay on commercial or public broadcasters.

The music database of a radio is a powerful tool in trying to reach these aspirations. The design of a database and its features essentially shape what listeners ultimately hear on the radio. This study provides a first comprehensive overview of perspectives on the questions: which tracks are selected for the archive, who participates in this selection process, and how can radio hosts access the archive. ORANGE 94.0 in Vienna served as the starting point for the analysis, with additional examples drawn from other community radio stations in Austria and abroad.

SCHALT DICH EIN
ORANGE 94.0

