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THE MOST TRUSTED NEWS IN RADIO

Townsquare is building a pop culture radio station — with a little help from a national website. Focused as much on the web as on radio, Townsquare Media earlier this month recast an under-performing Gen X station in upstate New York as a local radio extension of its national pop culture website. “Pop Crush 105.7” WQSH, Albany derives much of its content from PopCrush.com, a website whose growth is better measured in multiples than in percentages. The hot AC station may offer a hint of what’s to come from one of radio’s most digitally savvy operators. “Pop Crush 105.7” hopes to stand out from the pack as the go-to station for pop culture news. It draws on the resources of a national site staffed by an editorial team that posts updates several times an hour. One of the station’s product promises is “up to the minute news from the entertainment world.” Pop Crush Music News airs twice an hour at :15 and :45, delivered by “94.3 The Point” WJLK, Monmouth-Ocean, NJ afternoon host Matt Ryan. The updates air less frequently — several times a day and hourly online — across the company’s three-dozen top 40 and hot AC stations. But they’re part of the DNA of “Pop Crush 105.7.” “Part of the recipe for that station is being a pop culture magnet,” Townsquare Media EVP Erik Hellum says. The Albany station’s website displays content from the national portal and has a similar look and feel. But the company insists it’s not simply a repeater for national programming. “We have a staff of contributors in Albany, generating stories on local events and news,” SVP of programming Kurt Johnson says. While it’s logical to expect Townsquare to launch more local stations modeled after its national web properties, the company says the Albany flip was opportunistic and not necessarily the first piece of a national rollout. “We’re building national brands and when that opportunity presents itself to exploit them locally, we’ll capitalize on it,” EVP of business development Alex Berkett says.



“Pop Crush 105.7:” A radio station for a Google world. It’s been said so many times that it’s become cliché: We live in an on-demand world. That’s one reason why audio streaming for Hubbard all-news WTOP-FM, Washington (103.5) declined as the station built up its website. “You don’t need to wait for the story to come on the radio, you can read it on our site immediately,” WTOP director of digital media John Meyer says. Townsquare Media is attempting to satisfy that same instant gratification need — only in the always-on world of pop culture. “Listeners are looking for information now,” Townsquare Media SVP of programming Kurt Johnson says. “Our offerings provide information more quickly.” It’s not just top 40 and hot AC where the company is exploiting the immediacy of live radio to satisfy audiences’ non-fiction addiction. “Taste Of Country Nights” — a live radio show hosted by Jeremy Robinson that airs from 7pm-midnight on 44 Townsquare Media country stations — includes breaking country news and impromptu performances by country acts. LoudWire.com, a website devoted to hard rock, spawned “LoudWire Radio,” two-hour, top 20 weekend countdown show that airs on 17 stations. There’s also a “Pop Crush Top 20” countdown show. While digital is an after-thought for some radio companies, Townsquare launched in May 2010 with a focus on local media across multiple platforms. “The very structure of what we do integrates various media together,” Johnson says. In addition to 244 radio stations, the company hosts 350 live music and non-music events annually and has a network of music and entertainment digital properties reaching over 60 million unique visitors in the U.S. Townsquare stations drive traffic to their local websites. From there, visitors can jump off to the national platforms.

VSS sees revenue recovery continuing for radio. Based on the trends of the past nine months, Veronis Suhler Stevenson estimates total U.S. ad spending will grow 2% to \$147 billion this year. The private investment firm’s analysts say political and Sumer Olympics ad spending are responsible for the increase, as well as “accelerated growth” in radio and out-of-home media. The 26th edition of the VSS Communications Industry Forecast estimates total radio ad spending — including satellite radio — will rise 4.7% to \$19.18 billion in 2012. That’s an improvement over 2011 when, by its calculation, broadcast radio



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ad revenue dropped 0.2%. VSS says radio is building out its digital and mobile platforms and that's helping to attract more money from advertisers. "Digital's influence is now a constant and significant factor in every sector, segment and sub-segment of the U.S. communications industry," VSS president John Suhler says. He says that's "significantly changing consumption habits among both institutional and consumer end-users" as well as where dollars are being placed. VSS predicts nearly four-in-ten consumer-focused advertising dollars will be placed in digital media by 2016, up from a quarter last year. Looking out over the next four years, the firm estimates radio will grow at an annual rate of 2.9% due to the migration of advertisers to radio groups' online platforms, the burgeoning mobile platform, and the "resurgence" of differentiated programming. "Differentiated programming is expected to attract new listeners to broadcast radio stations, particularly at those with smaller group owners that want to highlight local personalities," VSS analysts predict. The firm's annual report also highlights several other positive trends, including the growth of Hispanic and black listening levels — which marketers will increasingly target. At the same time it sees "formidable challenges" for Sirius XM Radio as automakers add more options to the dashboard. "The main growth drivers will be rate hikes and efforts to market SiriusXM on mobile platforms," VSS concludes. At the same time it says newspapers, magazines and local consumer directories "continue to struggle" as well.

Cumulus reclaims two Kansas City stations. Nearly a year after Cumulus Media spun out four stations into a holding company as part of a prepackaged bankruptcy with one of its lenders, it's reclaiming half the stations. Cumulus will pay \$16.75 million to repatriate Kansas City's CHR "95.7 The Vibe" KCHZ and urban AC "Magic 107.3" KMJK. Staff and advertisers are unlikely to notice a difference since Cumulus has been operating the stations under a local marketing agreement since the chapter 11 filing was made last November. The holding company — run by broker Larry Patrick — earlier announced a deal to sell sports "ESPN 97.5 The Ticket" KFNC and adult alternative KHJK (103.7) in Houston to Gow Communications for \$5.05 million. It was in July 2009 that Cumulus Media Partners began discussions with NexBank and Deutsche Bank about reworking loans totaling \$97.4 million. In court filings Cumulus said the economic downturn in late-2008 and 2009 took a toll on revenue, pointing out those recessionary pressures were compounded in the Houston market by Hurricane Ike. The 2008 storm knocked down the towers for both its stations there. "This had a direct impact on the ratings and revenue of these stations, and indirectly the Hurricane had a lasting impact on the Houston local economy that continues today," Cumulus told the court. Last October the company and its creditors agreed to a prepackaged bankruptcy. Nearly a year later the sale of the four stations for a combined \$21.8 million essentially means the creditors received 22 cents on the dollar for their loans. While that may not sound like much, it's roughly the same rate that Inner City Broadcasting's creditors got the company's portfolio for — although less than the 36 cents on the dollar that Citadel Broadcasting's creditors got as part of their 2010 reorganization. The broker on the Kansas City sale was Patrick Communications.



After 50 years as commercial classical FM, Cleveland's WCLV prepares for a new noncommercial life. It's perhaps only fitting that a radio station that boasts of playing the greatest music of the past 500 years would slowly transition from standalone classical FM to a noncommercial station that's part of a larger public radio cluster. That's the evolution WCLV, Cleveland (104.9) has taken during the past decade. As of January 1 the 50-year old FM will become a noncommercial station as it becomes a sister to news-talk/jazz WCPN (90.3) and WVIZ-TV. The process began in 2000 when a three-way deal with Clear Channel was hatched to give WCLV a new position on the dial and \$40 million in cash. A foundation was created to preserve the station, which becomes part of Cleveland's public media operator Ideastream. "Since we've announced this we've have good response from a lot of our commercial advertisers," station co-founder Robert Conrad says. "We also have a lot of nonprofit advertisers who we know are not going to leave us because we're a big megaphone to arts fans." Once WCLV begins airing underwriting announcements instead of traditional :30s and :60s, the station will cut its current spotload in half from the current eight minutes an hour. Conrad says they're still determining whether advertisers will pay the same rates for the softer sell underwriting. "Our salespeople are really excited about the possibility of selling a television and two radio stations — these two audiences are very upscale," he says. Conrad says all commercial classical stations have been

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hurt by their dwindling ranks, which are no longer able to attract national advertisers. The format's rep firm, Concert Music Broadcast Sales, merged into Interep and faded away years ago. Conrad says WCLV is "doing okay" with local advertisers — and claims it has the market's longest-running advertiser. Key Bank (and its predecessors) have been sponsoring WCLV shows since 1964. But the loss of big corporations from Cleveland — like BP and TRW — has hurt. And record stores — once a big ad category — have all but disappeared. "Some of the obvious advertising revenue streams have just dried up, but we think there is a very loyal and long-standing audience out there," Conrad says.

A handful of commercial classical stations hold on. Over the past several years, stations in New York, San Francisco, Boston, Washington, Seattle and St. Louis have either found a way to preserve the format as a noncommercial station or have gone dark. Less than a dozen commercial classical stations remain in the U.S. today — a far cry from the early 1990s when nearly one hundred stations were in the format. "Classical 101.1" WRR, Dallas is one of the survivors. It has beaten back efforts to sell the city-owned station twice in the past decade and station spokesman Paul Adams says it has no plans to stop selling commercial time. "We strongly believe that the future of classical radio is going to be based on our unique ownership," he explains. "We make money and at the end of the year that goes back to local arts organizations." In other words, WRR is good for Dallas taxpayers. Adams says it has funneled millions of dollars to local arts groups in recent years — some of which come back in the form of advertising buys on the station. Judson Group's "Classical 95.9" WCRI-FM, Providence has been classical since it signed-on in 1996. General manager Chris Jones says it helps that most of the station's listening area doesn't overlap with any noncommercial station, although Boston's WBGH recently began simulcasting on a Providence market FM. "We have a lot of local advertisers and listeners who are dedicated to classical music, and that helps," Jones says. With hundreds of classical stations on the air — and the number is up 4% in the past year alone, according to the *Inside Radio* database — there's some reason to believe that the classical format has regained its footing. "The format as such is not disappearing from the dial because there are still many classical music stations out there that are publicly-operated," WCLV, Cleveland general manager Robert Conrad says. In fact he admits to being a little worried his station at 104.9 FM isn't at the left end of the dial where listeners are now conditioned to find classical music.

Live on L.A. radio, it's "carmageddon" time. Demand for traffic info in Los Angeles is always high but this weekend it could be off the charts. Los Angelinos are preparing for what's being hyped as Carmageddon II, when the busy 405 freeway will be closed in both directions for 10 miles between I-10 and the 101 freeway beginning at 7 p.m. Friday. The closure will permit the rest of the Mulholland Drive bridge to be demolished as part of a \$1-billion project. It's expected to cause a traffic nightmare on surrounding freeways and surface streets. With listeners tuning in for traffic updates more often than normal, Total Traffic Network is expanding coverage to its 55 radio and TV affiliates in the market. The service will add aerial coverage from its airborne fleet to monitor the entire region during the event. It will also be increasing personnel at each of its Traffic Operations Centers in Sherman Oaks and Santa Ana to ensure the impact of the closure is monitored and reported. The service is offering promotional discounts for subscriptions to its Sigalert platform, which provides real-time traffic information via the web and to mobile devices. "Regardless of what has gone on before, the Sepulveda pass intersects two of the busiest freeway interchanges in the world (405/10 and 405/101) and the potential for wide-reaching impact is very real," Total Traffic Los Angeles director of operations Terry Edwards says.

Limbaugh crosses the street in Atlanta to Cox's higher-rated news/talker. Clear Channel is signaling that just carrying the company's syndicated programming isn't enough. Ratings and revenue must follow. On the heels of its decision to jettison a low-rated talk format in Boston that featured some of the company's top talk personalities, it's poised to do the same in Atlanta. News-talk WGST, Atlanta (640) is giving up conservative talker Rush Limbaugh to Cox Media Group's rival news-talk WSB-FM & AM (95.5, 750) starting October 1. Clear Channel hasn't announced what it plans for WGST but signals point to Spanish-language sports. The company has registered the URL for ESPNDeportesAtlanta.com. An ESPN Radio spokesman declined to comment, and it's worth noting companies often register dummy URLs to throw off competitors.

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WGST has long struggled in the ratings, earning a 1.3 share (6+) in the August Arbitron while WSB posted a 4.8, its second consecutive down month. "Rush is host of America's No. 1 talk radio show, and it's fitting that he will be on the No. 1 news/talk station in America," Cox-Atlanta market manager Ben Reed said in a statement. The addition of Limbaugh's show sets off several other changes in the WSB lineup. Neal Boortz's show will lose its final hour, now airing from 8:30am-12noon. And Clark Howard's consumer advice show loses its afternoon timeslot to Limbaugh, as it gets pushed back to 8-10pm. WSB also returns to an afternoon drive news block (5-7pm) featuring commentary from Erick Erickson. The RedState.com editor had previously hosted his own early-evening (6-8pm) show on WSB. Reed says once Boortz retires next January, Herman Cain will take over his late-morning timeslot.

Apple's new iPhone operating system causing static with steering wheel controls. It's not you, it's me. Apple's not exactly breaking up with broadcasters, but its new iOS 6 isn't showing any love at the moment either. Stations may soon get complaints that their mobile streaming apps aren't working as they should. While there are some complaints about low volume, the biggest issue appears to be steering wheel controls no longer work on several car radio models, although basic streaming should still work when launched from the iPhone. Other features may also be missing, such as artist and song title. Apple's user forum shows people who have Alpine, Pioneer, Kenwood and Clarion receivers are all experiencing problems. Some manufacturers have announced their engineers are working overtime to fix the problem. "We will continue to update you regarding compatibility," Alpine tells its users. For now there's not much radio can do to help its iPhone listeners. More than five million iPhone 5s have been sold since last Friday's release.



Dave Ramsey marks unexpected milestone. Syndicated financial advice personality Dave Ramsey is marking his 20th year in radio this week across 500 stations. But his career in radio almost didn't happen. Ramsey was booked as a guest on a "Super Talk 99.7" WWTN, Nashville show. The station was in bankruptcy and when the host wasn't paid and quit, they put Ramsey in front of the mic. He offered to take the timeslot on in exchange for the commercial time that his two friends could sell. Two decades later with more than 500 affiliates it's become the largest independently owned, operated and syndicated program on radio. "I'm still surprised and honored that people call me at some of the most difficult and personal moments in their lives," Ramsey says. "Giving people hope for their future and seeing lives changed is why I do this every day." Ramsey will air a special anniversary show on Friday featuring celebrities, calls from long-time listeners and second generation callers. He'll also stream live video of the show for the first time.

Inside Radio News Ticker...Komets keep with WOWO...Federated Media's news-talk WOWO-FM & AM (92.3,1190) has signed a two-year contract to remain the radio home for the Fort Wayne Komets. The minor league hockey team says play-by-play announcer Bob Chase will return for his 60th season. He's called all the Komets' games except for the franchise's first season in 1952. The National Hockey League will present Chase with its prestigious 2012 Lester Patrick Award next month at the U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame in Dallas...**Univision puts focus on college...**Expect to hear a lot about education on Univision Radio the week of October 7th. The stations will be part of a companywide, cross-platform initiative targeting students and their parents. Special programs are planned on several radio stations, and they'll also promote the company's first online college fair and host an October 11 phone bank to answer questions about how to pay for college. Univision says the goal is to use all of its media outlets to roadblock the pro-education message. The effort was launched in February 2010 in partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the U.S. Department of Education...**People Moves...**An unexpected exit in Philadelphia. Read People Moves [HERE](#).

Inside Radio Deal Digest —

Des Moines — St. Gabriel Communications closes its \$600,000 deal to buy religious KIHS (88.5) from Calvary Radio Network. The deal includes the translator K233BT (94.5). St. Gabriel already owns religious KWKY (1150) in the market.

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