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Nielsen PPM Lost 90% of Hannity's Listeners

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This isn't funny anymore.

An affiliate station in a top 40 market carrying Sean Hannity's radio show in the past two months with a Voltair unit reinforcing Nielsen's encoded PPM signal showed a 90% increase in audience.

That's not even close to accidental.

That's downright fraud.

Talk, news and softer music formats do not get the same certainty that their encoded station signal will register on People Meters.

That's why the industry has too many hit stations and stations that play more strident music.

And why personalities are being fired as if they are a detriment to their stations.

They ARE – if you use Nielsen as a barometer.

And why djs are increasingly being shut up to run loud sweepers and other nonsense that PPM picks up reliably.

As reported yesterday, a high audience ratings official in the U.K. says that Arbitron, Nielsen's predecessor, knew in advance about the technology's fatal flaw.

Meanwhile Nielsen continues to stonewall.

The Canadian version of Nielsen that licenses their PPM technology has ordered all stations to stop using the \$15,000 Voltair unit that greatly increases radio audience. Or looked at another way, Voltair accurately reports radio listening that Nielsen misses.

The usual boys club of radio owners keeps looking the other way because it is in their best interest to do so.

Why?

Because Bain Capital which owns half of the largest radio group in the world – iHeart – is also a major investor in Nielsen.

And that radio owners including but not limited to iHeart are willing to take lower, inaccurate and fraudulent audience numbers because the present PPM system confirms their choice to fire expensive morning talent and go with sweepers in lieu of live personalities.

And if you think these bandits wouldn't do a stupid thing like that, what do you call firing salespeople when you're trying to increase sales?

You want to save talk? Install a Voltair box.

Now the tide is beginning to turn.

1. Hannity is livid and is considering suing Nielsen because, after all, his audience numbers are also his living on the line.
2. Nielsen is pandering to interests that call for more minority representation in the PPM sample group because unless a station's music is loud, it doesn't matter which ethnic group is paid more to be represented in the survey. They are getting screwed, too.
3. At the same time, talk stations are losing twice. Once, because the PPM placement is more heavily weighted to ethnic groups that are not traditional talk radio listeners and two, that stations' signals aren't loud enough to be picked up by a People Meter without Voltair.
4. People are getting fired because of PPM's inability to reliably pick up encoded signals from all types of radio formats. This is serious stuff, but not to Nielsen because owners look the other way and they get away with what is tantamount to fraud.
5. The only industry person that has balls enough to call out Nielsen on this is Richard Harker who is all over Nielsen. The other researchers and happy talk radio trades are missing in action.

6. Hello Pandora and Spotify! Thanks to Nielsen, you have the perfect story to get advertisers to increase their spend with products like yours because the numbers can accurately be verified with streaming services but not Nielsen radio ratings.

One more thing.

If a big name radio personality has to sue to get Nielsen's attention and radio owners choose to look the other way while their pockets are being picked, what's the advertising community's excuse?

They are placing hundreds of millions of dollars of radio business on inaccurate information.

Radio may not be as bad after all, but the executives who sweep this kind of thing under the rug are.

Hannity says: "Voltaire and the Harker studies indicate that everything we were told about PPM IS FALSE. The sad part is people have lost jobs, formats have been flipped, and it's likely stations have lost millions and millions of dollars because of faulty and inaccurate data that officials may have known is faulty."

"The entire radio industry needs to join together and demand answers as to what Nielsen/Arbitron knew and when they knew it. It may be very possible that radio owners have paid potentially hundreds of millions of dollars for their own demise."

"Radio has never faced a crisis this severe. We need answers immediately. I would be shocked if this does not end in litigation and a class action lawsuit."

The evidence is in. Is anyone else willing to step up?

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