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Satellite Radio & Shock Jocks: Shock Jocks: Howard Stern - Bad Boy of the Airwaves

By Reno Charlton

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Reno Charlton

The term "Shock Jock" has become well known since the 1980s. These bad boys of the airwaves have happily stomped on and disregarded the FCC regulations to the delight – and at times, disgust of their audiences. The rule of thumb in the "Shock Jock" entertainment form is, the more disturbing, shocking, and politically incorrect the show – the better.

Howard Stern, one of the highest paid radio personalities in broadcast history is the one who is responsible for the phrase "Shock Jock" Howard Stern has proclaimed himself "King of the Media" With his great success he pioneered what is known as "Shock Jock" radio programs. It is commonly believed that Howard Stern's exploitation of women, sex and his discrimination of certain ethnic groups is one of the main ingredients for his success. Howard Stern is the most fined personality in radio and actually encourages the fines and touts these FCC fines as if they were medals of Honor. The Howard Stern radio show was the beginning of a revolution in radio.

The Ingredients of Shock Jock Success

What is it about this type of radio program that brings so much success to these bad boys of the airwaves? The total shock value of their programs is one of the main ingredients to their success. For example, on one of Howard Stern's radio shows, he convinced a female caller to have phone sex with him on the air. He made deep buzzing noises into his microphone, and had her sit on a speaker with the volume turned up until she reached an on-the-air orgasm. Another notorious example occurred on DC101 Radio in Washington D.C. in which Stern called Air Florida Airlines and asked what the fare was for a one-way ticket from National Airport to the 14th Street Bridge. He was making light of the crash of an Air Florida flight into Washington D.C.'s 14th Street Bridge one day earlier, on January 13, 1982. That June 29, Stern was fired from DC-101 radio after being suspended for criticizing his station management and two other radio stations.

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The number of commercials aired during his radio show has greatly increased from the 1980s to the present. Though Howard Stern has brought much criticism to this form of entertainment, he still seems to be able to draw hords of listeners. Despite the provocative content of Stern's show—or perhaps because of it—many listeners and critics consider Stern to be a talented on-air personality and formidable interviewer.

The FCC and the Broadcast Industry Crackdown

Howard Stern's fame has brought out a number of imitation "shock jocks" who try to top Stern in terms of offensiveness and rudeness, but these imitators have found themselves with more troubles to worry about than listener ratings. In 2002 fellow Infinity Broadcasting Corporation jocks Opie and Anthony had their nationally syndicated WNEW-FM "extreme talk" show cancelled after they managed to get a couple to engage in sexual intercourse at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City, then airing a running commentary of the act on their show.

Though Stern's show is generally considered not to be as offensive as Opie and Anthony, on February 25, 2004, Clear Channel Communications "indefinitely suspended" him from six markets because of alleged indecency. The broadcasted show that brough so much retribution, featured Rick Salomon, whose sole claim to fame is the release of video showing him having sex with Paris Hilton.

During this show Stern held a sexually-oriented interview with Soloman, asking him graphic questions about anal sex. This came only a day after Clear Channel fired Bubba the Love Sponge for nearly the same reason.

This is considered to be part of a crackdown triggered by the Super Bowl XXXVIII halftime show controversy. Because Clear Channel and some of its executives have donated over \$200,000 to the Republican Party, Stern claims the company was trying to penalize him for his ruthless criticisms of President George W. Bush. He endorsed John Kerry in the 2004 U.S. presidential campaign, and encouraged listeners to vote for him.

On April 8, 2004, Clear Channel Communications announced it would "permanently terminate" its relationship with the shock jock after being fined \$500,000 by the FCC. However, on July 19, Stern returned to four of the six markets Clear Channel taken him off of, and added five new ones to his list — this time on Infinity-owned stations. In August, he returned to a fifth market, Miami, on an independent station. His return was greeted with controversy as the Miami Dolphins threatened to terminate their broadcast deal with the station if they did not fire him.

As a result of the this type of show's offensive practices there have been enormous fines as well as even more dire consequences to the personalities known as "Shock Jocks" Though the fines to these areas of broadcasting mounted up over the years in the most part the it was tolerated until era of the Janet Jackson scandal. With this broadcast scandal – tolerance went out the window and in came fierce regulation of the broadcast world.

Shock Jocks Turn To Satellite Radio

Like satellite television, Satellite radio is not marketed to any one demographic more than any other. The concept behind satellite radio is very basic. Satellite audio's model is a basic copy of Satellite television. XM Satellite Radio and Sirius Radio both have looked at DirecTV's success and set out to attract the same market to its product.

In the United States, two companies have monopolized satellite radio: XM Satellite Radio and Sirius Satellite Radio. XM has a 100,000 Sq. Ft. broadcasting facility in Washington DC as well as some satellite offices in New York. Sirius broadcasts out of New York City. They both require a person to buy equipment ranging from \$200 to \$500 in order to receive the signal, and they both have similar methods for dealing with spots not conducive to satellite coverage.

Originally some XM music channels had commercials, while Sirius was commercial-free. Since February 2004 XM has 68 Commercial-Free Music Channels, 33 Channels of News, Sports, Talk & Entertainment, 21 dedicated Channels of XM Instant Traffic & Weather. Sirius has 65 music-only channels as well as traffic and weather reports for major cities. XM operates on 2 geostationary satellites while Sirius uses 3 geosynchronous satellites. Both services are available mainly via portable receivers in automobiles, but both have many accessories so you can listen at home through your stereo, with a portable boombox, or online through your computer.

Local repeaters, on the same satellite frequencies, allow XM and Sirius's signals to be available even if

the view of the satellite is blocked. As of June 30, 2004, XM claimed 2.1 million subscribers, and Sirius claimed 400,000.

Car manufacturers have been installing satellite radio receivers in some models for a few years now, and several models of portable satellite radio receivers are available from a variety of electronics companies

Howard Stern heads for Satellite Radio

On October 6, 2004, Stern announced on his show that he has signed a five year, \$500 million deal with the satellite radio service Sirius. The deal, which takes effect on January 1, 2006, would enable Stern to broadcast his show without restrictions imposed by the FCC. The deal would permit Howard Stern to program two additional Sirius channels, one of which would be available at an extra charge to subscribers.

Opie and Anthony

Opie and Anthony are hosts of the satellite radio program 'The Opie and Anthony Show.' The show is based in New York City and airs on XM Satellite Radio. The show was previously on WNEW-FM in New York and WAAF-FM in Boston.

Opie and Anthony's crude style of entertainment has earned them the status of the elite of "shock jocks"

The pair signed a contract with XM on August 5, 2004 and started broadcasting October 4th of the same year. They had remained off-the-air for about two years as Infinity Broadcasting, their previous employer, held them to their contract as well as their no-compete clause. On XM satellite radio, O&A

are no longer bound by FCC regulations regarding language and content, thus curses and politically incorrect humor are common on their show.

There is some concern that with the initialization of satellite radio that mainstream media will begin to be monopolized by a few companies and many radio stations go off the air. Though it is important to safe guard the media from monopolization of the few, the future of the airwaves are in the heavens with satellite radio.

Reno Charlton is an experienced freelance copywriter and an award-winning children's author from the United Kingdom. You can read more of her informative articles on satellite radio at <http://www.car-satellite-radio.com>.

Will Howard Sterns Major Move have a Dramatic Effect on Radio Advertising Revenue

By Louis Victor – New Age Media Concepts

Will Howard Sterns Major Move have a Dramatic Effect on Radio Advertising Revenue by Louis Victor – New Age Media Concepts

Recently the "King of All Media" Howard Stern announced his agreement with SIRIUS Satellite Radio, the question is what type of impact will that have on the world of radio and it's advertising revenue?

Well lets just look at the impact that Howard Stern himself has made on the world of radio, he is undeniably one of the most popular figures in the world of all media not just radio. He has made his mark on media as being the pioneer of what they have dubbed the "Shock Jock", but before that was popular he was one of the only radio personalities that had the vision and more importantly had the heart, for lack of a better word, to make his own path and not follow the herd.

He created a revolution of sorts in the world of radio spawning a new breed of Disc Jockey in all of the major radio markets. Stern has overcome adversity and has been pinned to the cross more times than not. He has commanded loyalty from his audience and from his team, this has helped him conquer any market that he was allowed to enter.

So him being one man, how is this going to possibly have any major effect on radio advertising?, Howard Stern is a leader and an innovator, his listeners are loyal to him, these are ratings, high ratings equal increased advertising dollars. He is essentially the "Pied Piper" of the radio but this doesn't only hold true for his listeners but it holds true for the industry. Is it out of the question that he will attract the best of the best to follow him to SIRIUS?, I think it's more of a reality than most radio stations want to admit.

So will his jump will have an effect on the advertising revenue for his station 92.3 and the affiliate stations that he is airing on, time will tell, but if ratings equal advertising revenue, what happens when the ratings drop?, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure that out. Now its also not hard to figure out that SIRIUS is going to want to tap into everything that Stern brings with him so do not be surprised when the cost of subscribing to satellite radio drops, which will allow a greater fan base to listen to the

program.

The question is how much of an effect will this have on radio advertising revenue in general, will this be a domino effect and have the results of the AM station?, I can't predict the level of impact but if I were the "Radio Advertising Bureau" president I would take a deep hard look into it, because whether you love him or hate him, Howard Stern has become an Icon in broadcast radio.

Louis Victor, New Age Media Concepts

I have been involved in the investment, advertising, marketing and public relations industries for close to two decades.



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