

BikerBar Radio is in [OnMagazine's](#) October 2001 Edition (available in paper at your newstands now or online)

Radio Days



The Internet is crackling with the sounds and the passions of amateur radio enthusiasts. Here's how to join the crowd or just tune in online

By Alec Foegel

October 2001 - Milly De Mori never dreamed Internet radio could be so glamorous. A year and a half ago, the former New York City advertising executive launched her own online station, [Sound-Selective](#), mainly to give Americans a taste of some of her favorite electronic music from overseas. These days, De Mori, 34, is a globe-trotting club DJ and music consultant. She has spun records at runway shows for Christina Perrin and Iceberg, and programmed music for Sergio Rossi shoe stores. Though she doesn't make money from her station, she uses her broadcast, which streams online with the help of popular webcasting site [Live365.com](#), as a calling card for potential clients. She also receives e-mail and fresh music to play on the air from admirers around the world. "Internet radio creates a community that regular radio doesn't," says De Mori. "You are playing there live, and yet you have a contact with your audience. That's genius."

Better yet, you don't need to be a genius to use it. Armed with a 28.8K or faster modem, an online connection and a free, downloadable player for streaming audio —

ALEC FOEGE, a freelance writer, is working on a book about the online music revolution.

If you don't know what you're looking for, it's best to start from a hub site such as [Listen.com](#) or [Radio-Locator](#) and punch in any genre or location. Judging from a recent list of the most popular webcasts as compiled by Arbitron, the public's taste is pretty eclectic. Top stations include the Web-only [Beethoven.com](#) and [WABCradio.com](#), the online version of a popular New York City talk station. But some of the more intriguing broadcasts are amateur ones, most of which probably wouldn't have existed before the Internet.

[Coverrunner Radio](#), for instance, specializes in surf and beach-theme tunes. It is run by audio technician Noel Diotte, 49, from his 34-ft.-long Catalina sloop, Shearwater, which is moored in Redondo Beach, Calif. "My station is kind of an armchair dream factory for people who think about being out on the ocean," says Diotte, who lives on the boat with his wife, Diane, and their golden retriever, Holli.

Starting the station was easier than he could possibly have imagined. About 18 months ago, with no prior experience as a

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RealPlayer or Winamp, to name just two — anyone can tune into De Mori's station or any of the tens of thousands of others currently online. And almost as easily, you can turn the tables and try streaming your own music, talk show or sportscast by signing up with a free Internet-radio service provider like Live365.com or Shoutcast.

While traditional broadcast radio languishes in Top 40 purgatory — the same old stations playing the same old stuff (apologies to 'N Sync fans) — and total time spent listening over the last decade has declined, Internet radio serves up astonishing variety. Listeners can move from **motorcycle-theme tunes from Michigan** to opera with a twist to Voice of Russia, a state radio station that's available in English and other languages. "Internet radio is especially cool if you can imagine all of these people all over America in their offices listening to their own music channel," says Eric Wolfram, a computer consultant in San Francisco who regularly tunes into [Village Voice Radio](http://VillageVoiceRadio) for a quick hit of the New York City alternative weekly newspaper.

Most regular radio stations are also getting in on the act by posting simulcast streams of broadcasts on their websites, providing an easy way for you to listen to your favorite midday show while you're at work. "For a while, there was the notion that some guy in his garage in Erie, Pa., was going to suddenly start a station that would suck away your listeners," says Chuck Singleton, program director at WFUV-FM, a public radio station in New York City revered for its eclectic music roster. "A year later, most of the top Internet radio stations are traditional radio stations." Internet radio hubs like SonicNet.com, Spinner; owned by ON's parent, AOL TIME WARNER) and, for Mac users, iTunes, offer a virtual smorgasbord of preprogrammed music channels organized by taste and genre. To make access even easier, many new computers have radio software bundled in. No matter what method of finding tunes you use, there is something out there for every listener. "Internet radio is about being able to listen

DJ, Diotte ripped out a U-shaped banquette and table from the starboard side of his boat and replaced them with a teak-accented console stocked with spare audio components (nice, but by no means a requirement). Before long, he was recording a show that interweaves recordings by well-known performers like Joan Baez and Bob Marley with interviews and music from "local songwriters or sailors or both," he says.

With little more than his desktop PC and a phone line strung from land, Diotte now regularly uploads recordings of his show and features them on his website. Though he usually has only 5 or 10 listeners at a time, he has received fan e-mail about his station from places as far away as Sweden. "My next dream," says Diotte, "is to sit there with a wind generator, big banks of batteries on the boat, and broadcast live from Catalina Island or anywhere that the signal can be transmitted from."

Diotte's wish doesn't seem so outlandish in the fast-growing, anything-goes universe of Internet radio. With the help of wireless-modem technology from companies like OmniSky and Inficom, remote Internet radio transmission is only a matter of time and more affordable bandwidth. Kima and iM Networks are already selling free-standing Internet radio consoles and portable players. Next year, a few American cars, including some Lincolns, are expected to roll out of the factory with Web-radio devices in their dashboards that remember your favorite choices and gather more music that you might like, and Motorola's iRadio will show up in some European models.

The new medium appeals to advertisers too. [Live365.com's](http://Live365.com) director of marketing, Alan Wallace, says the commercial future of Internet radio looks bright since, unlike traditional stations, sites like his can sell advertising based on the number of overall impressions rather than pegging listeners to a specific type of programming. "Whether you're listening to a hip-hop show or you're listening to the news, there will eventually be a spot for an ad," he says. For now, though, Internet radio broadcasts contain far fewer ads than regular stations do, if they have any at all.

to something that's really specific to your needs," says Eric Rhoads, publisher of Radio Ink magazine.

One caveat: certain aspects of Internet radio broadcasting still fall into a legal gray area, though the big problems concern commercial webcasters, not amateurs or listeners. In July, for example, the recording industry locked horns in a pending copyright case with webcasters who let listeners indicate their music preferences. For now, even amateur jockeys should be sure to read all the rules posted on sites they choose to work with; they too are subject to the parameters of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998, which states that broadcasters may not play recordings within an hour of a request by a listener (supposed to deter illegal taping) and may not program more than three songs by the same artist in a three-hour period.

Some experts estimate that the audience for Internet radio is growing at about 10% per month, with approximately one-quarter of all Americans having listened to radio online at least once. But for now, even the top-rated webcasts fail to match the millions drawn to conventional radio. "Internet radio audiences are still smaller than traditional radio audiences in Whitewater, Wis.," says Kurt Hanson, CEO of a radio-industry research firm in Chicago.

That doesn't trouble Adrian Orozco, 33, proprietor of **Opera Smackdown**, who sees his radio station as a way to draw a hipper



crowd to the classics. "I've always admired opera and the theatrical element of it," says Orozco, a financial researcher in California who started his station about two years ago. "But one thing you notice when you go to the opera is there really aren't a lot of young people." Orozco combines familiar passages from La Boheme with obscurities and posts commentary on favorite performers, like soprano Cecilia Bartoli, on the site. "She's pretty up there," he says. "I like the faces she makes when she sings. I just think it's kind of groovy."

For the most part, however, online broadcasting still captures the innocence of those old ham radios. In a lot of ways, Internet radio has become a more human alternative to chat rooms, a place to meet new friends and share common interests. **Biker Bar Radio, driven by Michael Elta, a 50-year-old electrical engineer and Harley Davidson buff in Ann Arbor, Mich., began as a videoconferencing site about four years ago. Elta plays country favorites, and at any given moment he averages a few hundred listeners. He even gets requests from as far away as Germany and Japan. "I have very good musical taste," he says. Log on, tune in and judge for yourself.**

ALEC FOEGE, a freelance writer, is working on a book about the online music revolution.

MICHAEL ELTA is the Harley-Davidson buff behind the country-flavored BikerBar Radio

Great Stations

Do touch that dial: check out some of the great sounds people are putting online

Classical

[beethoven.com](#)

Waltz to the Web's highest-rated classical broadcast, where favorites like Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake share airtime with Maestro Ludwig's symphonies. Unexpected perks: music news and baseball caps.

[Opera Smackdown](#)

Adrian Orozco's Opera Smackdown unveils less-familiar arias from classics like The Marriage of Figaro; the site also offers irreverent notes for novices.

Electronica

[Groovetech](#)

With broadcasts from Seattle, London and San Francisco, Groovetech schedules DJs live in two-hour blocks. Added bonus: you can watch DJs pump the latest house music on a simultaneous video feed.

[Sound Selective](#)

Up-to-the-minute platters from international sensations like Dimitri from Amsterdam make DJ Milly De Mori's station a must-hear for au

Country/Folk

[Biker Bar Radio](#)

Amateur DJ Michael Elta plays the music he'd like to hear while riding his Harley — Steve Earle, Gillian Welch, Lucinda Williams and many others.

[Coverrunner](#)

Folk singer Joan Baez and easy-living entrepreneur Jimmy Buffett stream from Noel Diotte's boat in Redondo Beach, Calif.

[Net Radio](#)

Click on 60s COUNTRY at this otherwise generic radio hub, and you can practically smell the hay. The station programs down-home favorite artists from hillbilly's heyday, like Johnny Cash and Buck Owens.

Jazz

[WKCR](#)

Columbia University's radio station has a worldwide reputation for its in-depth jazz programming.

[Louisiana Radio](#)

From Professor Longhair to Boozoo Chavis, this Internet-only station turns up the heat with authentic Cajun, jazz and zydeco.

Eclectic

[wfuv.org](#)

From Fordham University in the Bronx, N.Y., WFUV is one of the nation's most popular public radio stations, drawing big numbers with its intelligent mix of music and cultural commentary.

[PolkaWeb](#)

Need polkas 24/7? This accordion-music monitor tunes you into the best polka programming, including The Jolly Joe Timmer Show on WGPA in Bethlehem, Pa.

[Radio of India](#)

Catch the latest Bollywood hits, along with live broadcasts of cricket matches. This station is available in several languages.

Pop/Rock

[KFOG](#)

Classic rock (Eric Clapton, U2) from San Francisco's premier classic-rock station. These guys practically invented the format.

[3wk](#)

An Internet-only station in St. Louis run by Jim and Wanda Atkinson, a husband-and-wife team who mix popular alternative acts like Radiohead with lesser-knowns like Built to Spill.

courant audiophiles.

R&B/Hip-Hop

Bring the Noise

Fronted by Chuck D, formerly of Public Enemy, Bring the Noise pits rap's pioneers against the latest and greatest — and sometimes profane — freestylers. Parental guidance suggested.

KMOJ

This urban contemporary station in Minneapolis spreads on smooth R&B hits by Dave Hollister and Jagged Edge, as well as some tame rap.

Talk

KenRadio

What better place to get your dotcom updates than on Ken Rutkowski's Internet-only tech-news roundup? Streaming from Los Angeles, KenRadio might give you the business edge you need — or just make you edgy.

Kyle365.net

The Kyle Hojem Radio Network, five stations in all, is the product of one 13-year-old Irvine, Calif., resident. The best station, Jack Benny to Gunsmoke!, reprises old radio shows

World

Asian Vibrations

Gaurav Malhotra, 22, working from his parents' house in Queens, N.Y., plays an eclectic mix of Asian-tinged pop music.

Mad Vibes

This authentic-feeling webcast specializes in dance-hall reggae artists such as Lexus and Sean Paul.

Radio Hubs

Go to these sites and just browse for stations

Listen.com

A good site with plenty of genres to choose from, literate reviews and a search engine.

Radio.yahoo.com

An excellent guide to top traditional radio stations online across the country.

SonicNet.com

Celebrity DJs pick the playlist. Who knew Moby likes listening to Led Zeppelin?

Spinner.com

AOL-owned Spinner hosts over 150 site-specific channels in every musical genre.

How to Listen

Getting Internet radio on your PC is easy if you follow these simple steps

1. SEARCH

Go to a well-organized Internet-radio hub like **Listen.com** (Mac users, try **iTunes** and search by genre or location.

2. DOWNLOAD

a free audio player, such as RealPlayer or Winamp. It takes about 15 to 30 seconds for the software to find the optimum connection speed and refine the sound quality.

3. HAVING TROUBLE?

A 28.8K modem will usually do, but some stations are best heard via broadband. If you can't log on at all, the station may be jammed with listeners. Don't fret; just go elsewhere.

How To Broadcast

Don't just listen! Put your own radio shows online and live out those DJ dreams

live365.com

The most user-friendly broadcaster site, perfect for beginners.

Radio Moi

More bare-bones than most, this site lets you choose tunes only from a predetermined music bank.

Shoutcast

Multiple software components and a bring-your-own-server policy make this site more suitable for the technically adept.

1. Visit an Internet radio service provider such as Live365.com or Shoutcast and click on the broadcast option. Read the instructions for the basic formats and decide whether you will upload a prerecorded loop or broadcast live from your computer. If you're broadcasting live, your system must meet the minimum requirements: a 300-Mhz processor and 64MB of RAM. The basic services at these sites are free.
2. Download free encoding software like MusicMatch or RealPlayer to convert music from your CDs into MP3 files for broadcast. This process is much simpler if you've already copied onto your hard drive the material that you intend to play; otherwise, each track must be encoded separately.
3. Prepare for broadcast by giving your station an eye-catching name and uploading MP3 files to an Internet radio server. Live365.com makes this step a lot easier than most by giving you a limited allotment of free memory on its server, enough to hold about five hours of music.
4. Create your playlist by putting your tracks in whatever order you want; you can also have them play randomly, like on a jukebox. Press Play. Don't forget to tell your friends and relatives to tune in — you can e-mail them the link to your station.