Radio Remains Resilient

Nielsen Media Research releases its March 2020 radio listening data today, highlighting that AM/FM radio retained the lion’s share of its February 2020 performance at 90% of AQH listening and 96% of its reach. True to its heritage as a go-to, companion medium in good times and bad, Radio helped bridge the gaps as listeners sought out familiar voices in times of change.

Throughout the month of March, we saw how the force of home has been combined with an increase in in-home activity. As state governments issued shelter-in-place orders, a significant portion of the population is still working out-of-home and their Radio listening remains strong. The Out-of-Home audience at 71% is still the dominant mode of Radio listening, even as AM/FM listenership maintained 96% of its reach and 90% of its average quarter hour audience as in-home listening is on the rise.

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As expected, the In-home audience showed the most growth from February ranging from 86% (San Diego) to 95% (Minneapolis). The cities hardest hit by the Coronavirus - New York and Seattle - were not at either end of the spectrum.

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Nielsen's reporting of out of home listening is about how consistent the majority of AM/FM radio formats performed in March 2020 compared to February, January and December 2019. As expected, the out-of-home listening audience at 71% is still the dominant mode of Radio listening, but more people are likely staying home due to the road, according to a study conducted by American Time Use Survey.

The audience for AM/FM radio formats are showing some growth, but consistency is the big story as the majority of formats turn in similar shares month-to-month. As state governments issued shelter-in-place orders, a significant portion of the population is still working out-of-home and their Radio listening remains strong. The Out-of-Home audience at 71% is still the dominant mode of Radio listening, even as AM/FM listenership maintained 96% of its reach and 90% of its average quarter hour audience as in-home listening is on the rise.

WHAT ABOUTformats?

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