

## Impact case study (REF3b)

<b>Institution:</b> Bournemouth University
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> UOA36
<b>Title of case study:</b> Promoting and leading British radio archive policy.
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)

BU research has demonstrated the benefits of radio archives. Radio recordings are a rich source of social, cultural and political history. Until recently archives have been inaccessible to schools, community organisations, scholars and other users. Research by the Centre for Media History (CMH) at Bournemouth University (BU) was the motivation behind a committee being formed to raise awareness of the problem. The committee strongly supported the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in making their catalogue available to the public via the British Library (BL). The research itself informed the library's new sound archive policy. Archive access has a wide range of benefits to the production industry, education, culture and the economy.

<b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)
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The CMH has won over £1 million in grants to digitise radio collections and, together with published output, this has created the leading academic centre for radio history.

The published output of Chignell (BU 1997 to present), Street (BU 1995–2011), Turnock (BU 2003–2006) and Holland (BU 2012 to present) is based on the detailed analysis of audio-visual and written archives. This pioneering work has revealed the intellectual and cultural value of recorded twentieth century radio and television and directly facilitated successful grant applications to digitise selected collections.

One of the lessons learned from this output (the publications and the funded projects) is that old radio programming has value. It provides a revealing insight into British culture, which has hitherto been seriously neglected. Radio, because of its everyday and transparent quality, is a record of changing social values, behaviour, beliefs and every facet of social and cultural life. This is all seen through the lens of thousands of hours of radio dramas, magazines, phone-ins, documentaries, news and other radio genres.

The research itself is best illustrated and explained through specific examples of both publications and funded research projects.

### 1. Research into early commercial radio in the UK (P3)

This is the ground-breaking and definitive study by Street of pre-war commercial radio, based on a meticulous examination of very rare early radio located in highly dispersed collections of audio, documents and ephemera. Not only is the work exemplary in the use of archives, but it has also been intellectually and historically significant and contributed to a revisionist pre-war broadcasting history.

### 2. London Broadcasting Company / Independent Radio News Digitisation Project, 2007 (G1)

As the published output of the CMH revealed the extraordinary richness and value of neglected, archived radio, this project showed the possibility of putting large amounts of radio online. Over 3,000 hours of radio news was transferred from reel-to-reel tape to digital format and, crucially, augmented by detailed meta-data, researched and input by specially recruited and trained researchers. This project showed the potential use of daily news output as an historical record; notably in the case of the Falklands War and Margaret Thatcher's premiership (P4).

### 3. Professor Hugh Chignell – research into current affairs radio

This research is based largely on the BBC Radio Four *Analysis* archive, which is housed at BU. Using a combination of listening to recorded radio and reading transcripts, Chignell has shown how current affairs radio developed from its origins in the 1950s and how one radio programme,

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*Analysis*, influenced the public sphere by providing an early platform for Thatcherite ideas in the 1970s and the 'Third Way' in the 1990s. This initial research formed the basis of a broader survey of talks, news and current affairs radio (P1).

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

#### Publications

**P1.** Chignell, H. (2011). *Public Issue Radio: Talks, News and Current Affairs in the Twentieth Century*. Palgrave MacMillan: Basingstoke. ISBN: 978-0-230-24739-0.

**P2.** Holland, P. (2006). *The Angry Buzz. This Week and Current Affairs Television*. London: I.B. Tauris. ISBN: 978-1-845-11051-2.

**P3.** Street, S. (2006). *Crossing the Ether, Pre-War Public Service Radio and Commercial Competition in the UK*. London: John Libbey. ISBN: 978-0-861-96668-4.

**P4.** Chignell, H. (2007). The London Broadcasting Company (LBC) and Independent Radio News (IRN) Archive. *Twentieth Century British History*, 18(4), 514–525. DOI: 10.1093/tcbh/hwm034.

#### Funded archive research projects

**G1.** 2007: Street was awarded £759,000 by the JISC to digitise a large part of the London Broadcasting Company/Independent Radio News (LBC/IRN) archive housed at the University.

**G2.** 2007: Holland won £91,000 from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) to fund 'There's no such thing as society? A study of broadcasting and the public services under the three Thatcher governments, 1979–1990.'

Chignell was co-investigator for both of these projects.

### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

BU research has demonstrated the social and cultural benefits of radio archives. This information was instrumental in the forming of a committee to raise awareness of the lack of archive access, but also directly informed BL's new sound archive policy.

In December 2011, BU hosted a summit attended by representatives from the BL, Ofcom, the BBC, Danish archives, regional archives and UK higher education institutions. BU researchers presented a summary of their findings to the BBC and the BL, stating why radio archives needed to be more readily available (R1). At the summit the UK Radio Archives Advisory Committee (UKRAAC) was born, with Chignell as chair (R2).

Soon after the establishment of UKRAAC, the BBC agreed to give BL's 16,000 daily users access to their digital catalogue (the 'BBC Pilot Project'). This archive had previously been completely inaccessible. In a speech at the British Library on 29 September 2012, the CEO of the BL announced that a version of the catalogue would be available in the reading rooms. It was made available online via BL computers in January 2013.

The importance of BU's research in this decision is confirmed by BL's Head of Sound and Moving Image, who said: "Research by the CMH at BU clearly demonstrates the social and cultural benefits of radio archives. The cultural, artistic and social importance of BBC and commercial radio emerges powerfully in *Crossing the Ether* by Street [P3] and *Public Issue Radio: Talks, News and Current Affairs in the Twentieth Century* [P1] by Chignell" (R3).

He continued: "Bournemouth University's research findings assisted our lobbying of the BBC to make their archive catalogue available at the Library. In addition, research by Bournemouth

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University researchers has supported and informed the development of the Library's Radio Archive policy" (R3).

Access to the archives now offers wide-reaching benefits to culture and economy, as well as applied use in education and the radio industry.

### Education

Archives are a rich primary source material for teachers. They bring the UK's social, cultural and political history to life in the classroom in a colourful, interactive and memorable way. Using digital archives also fosters digital literacy, which is an important social benefit at a time when the UK strives to be a leader in the creative industries.

### Radio industry

The archives are a valuable learning tool and inspirational resource for creative minds developing new programming and technologies. As in any industry, past excellence feeds and informs future excellence. And from a purely practical point of view, the archives facilitate the review, exchange and licensing of production.

Orion Media own Gem 106 in the East Midlands (441,000 listeners each week – R4) and Free Radio in the West Midlands (nearly 700,000 listeners each week – R4). The Group Programme Director for Orion Media confirmed: "Research carried out at Bournemouth University has genuinely made a significant contribution to developing a UK radio archive policy." (R5).

### Economic

The BL's 'National Radio Archives' policy, actively supported by UKRAAC, proposes to have all commercial, community and online radio output archived in the next few years. This would centralise storage and would be a single cost-effective solution for the radio industry. Archives facilitate programme and content sharing between different industry sectors, opening new outlets and markets for production.

### Cultural

This resource offers the public a reservoir of 21<sup>st</sup> century entertainment to enjoy.

There is also evidence to show that radio archives and their use are becoming increasingly important and that the role of BU in leading the dissemination and use of archives is acknowledged by researchers from other institutions (R6).

BU's work on archive policy has also been acknowledged by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). On 19 October 2012, Chignell and Stoller, along with representatives from the BL, attended a meeting with the DCMS. The aim was to put forward the case for not only improving access to old archives but making sure all current radio output would be archived. DCMS representatives agreed with the UKRAAC policy paper and a commitment was made to support a national radio archive.

In conclusion, the BL had aspired to be the 'national radio archive' for some time and the BU initiative has provided the academic stamp of approval to help make that a reality. Access to the BBC's sound archive catalogue was a significant milestone for BU and BL with subsequent economic, cultural, industry and educational benefits already emerging.

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**5. Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of 10 references)

**R1.** Franklin, I. and Skoog, K. (2011). *Listening to Learn and Learning to Listen. A Report on UK Radio Archives: Policy, Practice and Potential*. Bournemouth University: Centre for Broadcasting History. Available from: <http://ukradioarchives.com/research-publications/> [accessed 21 November 2013].

**R2.** Minutes from a meeting at the British Library, December 2011, when UKRAAC was established (available on request).

**R3.** Letter from the British Library's Head of Sound and Moving Image (available on request).

**R4.** Radio Joint Audience Research, or RAJAR; six months, ended March 2013. Available from: [http://www.rajar.co.uk/listening/quarterly\\_listening.php](http://www.rajar.co.uk/listening/quarterly_listening.php) [accessed 21 November 2013].

**R5.** Statement from Group Programme Director for Orion Media (available on request).

**R6.** Testimonials from researchers outside Bournemouth University (available on request).