

#goodradioclub

“Good Radio Club: Lots of people listen to the same radio show and Twitter about it. Nicely.”

Paul Carvill, <http://paulcarvill.com>

A small experiment in ‘social listening’. We invited a small group of Radio 4 listeners to tune in to Radio 4’s brainiest show, Analysis, at 2030 on Thursday 26 February and to join a conversation about the programme’s topic – social housing – on Twitter. They were asked to mark their contributions by typing the ‘hash tag’ #goodradioclub in their tweets (Jem Stone came up with the idea, basing it on another successful Twitter experiment: Bad Movie Club).

We used simple online tools to capture the resulting conversation. Twitterfall.com displayed a rolling sequence of tweets tagged #goodradioclub. Yahoo Pipes was used to blend several Twitter search terms into a single RSS feed for feed readers. A Tumblr blog was set up at <http://goodradioclub.co.uk> as home for the feed and for information about #goodradioclub. No development work was done (although Tristan Ferne did help us get our Yahoo Pipes sorted out) and no money spent.

The result was a small hit. 24 Twitterers (including Jem Stone and myself) joined in and sent 102 tweets using the hash tag #goodradioclub – that’s just over 4 per head. Almost all of the tweets were sent during the show or in the few minutes on either side of it. An unknown number ‘lurked’ and watched the conversation using Twitter and Twitterfall but didn’t join in.

The experience of listening to Analysis while watching a Twitter feed and tweeting thoughts as they came to me was positive: enriching the experience but not distracting from the excellent radio programme at the heart of the

thing. It was actually quite exhilarating because it required some additional thought. It's hard to veg out while listening to Analysis at the best of times but harder still when you're required to make a contribution!

#goodradioclub isn't an 'audience exploder'. It's not the kind of thing you'd do to create a huge buzz around a brand or an event and it probably won't double your reach or fix your ratings decline – it's more of a **'conversation enabler'**. We wrapped a conversation around an existing programme brand to make the experience richer and more engaging – for programme makers as well as for listeners. Hugh Levinson, the programme's editor said *"I was gripped by the Twittering last night – exciting and alarming at the same time."* We think there are programmes all around the BBC schedules that could benefit from the addition of a spontaneous, live conversation alongside the linear output. Things to do now:

1. Improve the presentation of the conversation. We might build or commission a simple tool to present the stream of tweets in an accessible way.
2. Make it easier to start a conversation. Programme makers or multiplatform teams might want to start conversations around their programmes or they might just want to invite listeners to start their own. A widget or a badge might make starting and following a conversation easier.
3. Keep experimenting. We'll try this again with different kinds of programme and different audiences. We'll record the results and share them.

Participants included: Kenan Malik, an Analysis presenter and Moral maze regular, Pete Harrington, head of comms at Demos and Hugh Levinson, Analysis editor (Hugh lurked). Others were mostly regular Radio 4 listeners but not necessarily Analysis fans.

The stats

#goodradioclub

marksimpkins	1
pocketpoet	
everythingabili	1
mr danielweir	
simonsmithster	
offmessage	
bowbrick	
kenanmalik	
dauidsonhouston	
jensstone	
sir terence	
westpier	
pauho	
toppage	1
vellimluap	1 (in pub!)
robertbrook	
jimlynn	
hawkida	
richardsmedley	
lucasgonzalez	
charlieedwards	
demos	
samcare	
pete_harrington	

24 Twitterers, 102 tweets, 4.25 per participant.