

Scale and representation in community radio: The case of Cincinnati's WAIF-FM
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The concentration of radio station ownership and the priority that stations place on content at national and global scales has led to deterritorialization and a sense of placelessness at the local scale. As an alternative to these homogenizing forces, community radio has proven itself to be an alternative medium that allows citizens to construct their own local media space on terms determined by themselves. This paper is an attempt to understand how WAIF 88.3 FM, an all-volunteer community radio station in Cincinnati, Ohio is meeting the needs of the local community. The study was conducted mostly through semi-structured interviews and observation of station activities as well as through content analysis. Interviews with station volunteers documented the motivation for participation in community radio and the networks of communication and support that are linked to the station. Analysis of programming revealed that WAIF maintains a multi-scalar product with emphasis on representing groups that have traditionally been denied access to mainstream media outlets. The paper concludes by noting the relevance of the WAIF case study for broader issues of media control, content, and scale.

Key Words: Community Radio, Alternative Media, Media Geographies