



Click!

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Click! focuses on World Wide Websites, PC software, and hardware that can be used to listen to international broadcasters and other English-language public broadcasters via Internet-based technology. Broadcaster websites and other web resources are covered. Feedback and suggestions are always encouraged -- please include Click! in the subject line of any e-mail.

When you don't know what to listen to...part two...how about ABC's *Radio National* online archive?

From my earliest days listening to shortwave, one of my favourite broadcasters has been Radio Australia. In recent years, Radio Australia has been noteworthy for providing an outlet for some excellent domestically-oriented programming from *Radio National*, the spoken-word radio service of Australia's ABC that, in many respects, serves as Australia's analogue to the CBC's *Radio One*.

To its credit, *Radio National* has long made aggressive use of its Internet website to provide information about its programming, archived transcripts of weekly series, and, more recently, extensive podcasts and a rolling four-week audio archive.



In May I discovered that, for many *Radio National* programs, this online archive is now considerably longer than just four weeks; for some programs, such as the long-running science discussion program *Ockham's Razor*, the audio archive appears to include most, if not all, editions of the program produced since 2005.

Whether or not a particular program has a "shelf life" for four years is a different matter...for current affairs or topical investigative programming, something that's four years old might not be worth listening to, but there are documentaries, history, and other cultural features that are much more likely to age well.

When you consider the range and quality of programming produced by *Radio National*, this is really a marvelous resource, especially when you compare it to the single week's worth of archived programming typically offered by the BBC's *Radio 4* service.

Check out Radio National's website at <http://www.abc.net.au/rn>

BBC Global Minds: Using the web to solicit feedback

In addition to broadcaster websites serving as resources for streaming audio,

program guides, or frequency listings, some broadcasters use their websites to solicit listener feedback, either by letters, surveys, or regular “listener panels” used to gather information on likes and dislikes.

The BBC has recently launched an initiative called *BBC Global Minds* to set up a series of web forums (message boards) that discuss various aspects of BBC programming geared to global audiences – the BBC World Service on radio,



GLOBAL MINDS
DELIVERING GREAT IDEAS

BBC World TV service, and the stable of information-oriented BBC websites. In addition to the message boards, there are

surveys and even content reviews – where one is asked to stream a radio story or a video clip and provide feedback on the clip while you are watching or listening to it.

If you're interested in participating, check out <http://www.bbcglobalminds.com> . One thing I've already found in my time there is that some of the BBC editors that are interacting with listeners don't have specific experience with shortwave – so this turns into an opportunity for me to educate the editors on the differences in serving a global audience via radio, and, more specifically, via shortwave, than via websites or TV broadcasts. Will that input help to bring the BBC World Service on shortwave back to targeting North America? Probably not, but those of us who particularly enjoy radio – and shortwave – can at least be more visible and more vocal to broadcasters this way.

Web sources for “non-broadcast” audio of merit

For many, shortwave radio was an introduction into global perspectives and the relationships countries had with each other, since – in many instances – the domestic news sources available to us talked about issues of local or national merit – with little emphasis on global matters. For that, we turned to shortwave broadcasters such as the BBC World Service and Radio Netherlands.

The advent of the World Wide Web and its capability to deliver audio and video has enabled many organizations to produce audio and video for download or online streaming, without the encumbrances of owning radio transmitters or broadcasting licenses. If you have a microphone, a way to record audio and save it in an audio format such as MP3, and a place to store said audio and make it available to others, then you're good to go!

From time to time in *Click!*, I'll introduce you to some organizations that produce audio content and make it available for streaming or download. I'll generally focus on organizations that have an international perspective, whose programming might be at home at broadcasters such as Deutsche Welle, Radio Netherlands, the BBC World Service, and their kin. This is a two-way street: If

you have your own favourite sites for this genre of programming, then send along those suggestions so I can post them here.

Unfortunately, there aren't any websites that serve effectively as directories of such content. I could see value in creating a user-populated website that lists programs, their sources, their frequency of issue, and a review of their content. What I generally do is use the Google web search engine using such terms as "current affairs podcast", "foreign affairs podcast", and "documentaries" to ferret out programs of possible interest.

My first entry in this vein is a weekly podcast called *The World Next Week*, produced by the Council on Foreign Relations. Quoting from the Council's mission statement, "...*The CFR is an independent, nonpartisan membership organization, think tank, and publisher dedicated to being a resource for its members, government officials, business executives, journalists, educators and students, civic and religious leaders, and other interested citizens in order to help them better understand the world and the foreign policy choices facing the United States and other countries...*".



The World Next Week is a weekly 15-minute (give or take) program in which CFR.org Acting Editor Robert McMahon and *Foreign Affairs Magazine* Managing Editor Gideon Rose preview major world events in the week ahead. What is interesting about the program is that it analyses these events before the "spinmeisters" get a chance to filter the events by their particular perspectives or agendas. What I didn't like about the program is that, instead of the two hosts sitting in a studio together, or even using a Skype connection so that, with decent bandwidth, it sounds like two people sitting around a table, one person was in a studio and the other was on the phone. Phone line quality makes for a tiring listen in my bood...that's why the early days of streaming audio were such a pain, when a typical bandwidth was 8 kbps – essentially phone-line quality.

Easiest way to find *The World Next Week* is to visit the Council on Foreign Relations' website, <http://www.cfr.org>, then look down the left margin for the graphic for *The World Next Week*. The CFR produces other audio as well; you can find this by clicking on <Publication Type> and then looking for <Podcasts> or <Audio> in the left margin.

Hope everyone enjoys the warmer weather... don't forget to drop me a note if there's something you'd like to see discussed in the column!