

Digital radio spreads Afrikaans music globally

Listener-driven radio (LDR) is helping the Afrikaans music scene grow through [Ja.fm](#), an online radio station provided by Kagiso Media's Jacaranda FM. The technology is being endorsed by Afrikaans musicians such as Snotkop and Christiaan Botha, who see it as a way of improving engagement with their audiences and bringing new music to the attention of the public.



According to Attila Bernariusz, divisional head of Kagiso Digital, the station is experiencing good growth in listeners every month as South Africans and South African expats tune in to hear the latest Afrikaans music.

The channel plays a wide range of Afrikaans music and gets the audience to steer the playlist through their online votes. Nearly anything goes - as long as it is Afrikaans - from Bok van Blerk, Bobby van Jaarsveld and Anneli van Rooyen to Glaskas, Fokofpolisiekar and Jack Parow.

"Listeners become highly engaged with the platform because they feel like they are shaping the music that plays," says Bernariusz. "Our charts are an interesting reflection of the music that listeners want to hear."

"An accurate snapshot"

Snotkop concurs, "The system is incredible for artists, as it is a true reflection of what is popular at any current time. It is an accurate snapshot of what people want to hear. It also affords an opportunity for artists who might not enjoy a lot of exposure on radio to be heard and exposed."

"Things can quite easily become boring and many artists fall into the trap of thinking that the music traditional radio stations play is the only music the public want to hear," says Christiaan Botha, lead singer and guitarist for NRG. "Because of this, artists' creative thoughts stagnate and before we know it, we all just do the same thing instead of leading with new ideas. LDR has not only given the listener the power to choose, but it has also empowered the artist."

Creating an online Afrikaans radio station was a natural move for Kagiso Media because the Afrikaans music scene is more vibrant than ever before, says Bernariusz. Afrikaans language and its culture are reportedly stronger than ever, with Afrikaans listeners displaying a real passion for Afrikaans music.

The success proves that there is a viable business model for niche, online radio stations, Bernariusz says. Serving more than 20 000 LDR sessions over a 30-day period and with audience interaction rates growing 13% in the last month, it is quickly establishing itself as a popular online radio station in South Africa.

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