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KCMU-FM Launches Live Uncompressed Audio to Internet Listeners Worldwide



ResearchChannel



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON



The First Radio Station To Provide 24-Hour Uncompressed Audio On The Internet

Seattle, Washington - October 20, 2000. Radio listeners worldwide can now enjoy music at high fidelity thanks to a partnership of radio, networking and computing experts who are pushing Internet technologies to create an unsurpassed sound experience. KCMU 90.3 FM, Seattle's non-commercial eclectic music station, has joined with two other high-tech partners: the Pacific Northwest Gigapop, the Pacific Northwest's access point to the nation's next generation of high-bandwidth Internet networks – and ResearchChannel, a leader in high-bandwidth experiments to deliver research information. The three organizations came together to offer listeners the opportunity to hear live uncompressed audio of KCMU's programming service. Building on the Pacific Northwest Gigapop infrastructure and ResearchChannel's experiments in multi-media, KCMU's uncompressed programming stream alleviates the distortion that normally occurs with compressed audio. This new service is the first successful attempt at delivering an uncompressed stream of a radio station's broadcast service over the Internet.

KCMU's uncompressed audio feed originates at studios on the University of Washington's Seattle campus. Analog program audio is routed via optical fiber to a Windows Media encoder located in the Pacific Northwest Gigapop. The result is an uncompressed audio stream at 1.4 megabits per second (Mbps), which is then available via multiple unicast from a dedicated server to listeners using Windows Media Player 6.4 or later.

Most Internet radio is currently encoded with such products as Real Audio or Windows Media with an average bitrate of 100 kilobits per second (kbps). MP3, another popular form of audio processing, uses MPEG audio compression to produce streams averaging 160kbps. The KCMU uncompressed audio data transmission exceeds FM broadcast quality and approaches that of pre-recorded CDs, allowing listeners to experience high-fidelity stereo audio sampled at 44.1 kHz (16bit) streaming at over 1.4Mbps. KCMU Radio via Internet offers the convenience of worldwide access without compromising sound quality.

Contact:

Tom Mara
KEXP-FM
tmara@cac.washington.edu
(206) 520-5811
www.kexp.org

Jacqueline Brown
Pacific Northwest Gigapop
gigapop-info@pnw-gigapop.net
(206) 934-5588
www.pnw-gigapop.net

Susan Brandt
ResearchChannel
sbrandt@cac.washington.edu
(206) 685-9137
www.researchchannel.com



More Music and Technology Experiments in the Future:

Since the release of this announcement, KCMU has changed its name to KEXP to reflect an exciting new partnership. KCMU, University of Washington and Experience Music Project (emplive.com) have joined forces to build on KCMU's innovative music programs and technology experiments. Watch for more radio and technology experiments in the future.

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