

# AM, FM to PM: Will we become Radio Ga-Ga in the drive towards anti-social media?

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When are we silent in today's age? Whether it be the obsession with fast paced, throw-away doomscrolling, to the demand for binge-watching to keep in the loop, to the ultra-processed slop of advertisement in music industries, to the endless fear of becoming 'anti-social' in our desire to reach for more than just a screen. Undoubtedly, the gravitational pull of physical media has become palpable, but is this sustainable? Despite this massive movement towards the creation of tangible news and art, with the uprising of zines and magazines being marketed both subscriptionally online and through papers in fashionable high street stores, it begs to question whether this is another cycle in unfruitful trends or the tipping point of how we absorb media.

I pose an idea - radio.

A time before the dependence on social media and internet usage is not a reminiscence, but a pure fantasy for us of Generation Z. Seeking the human-made is somewhat of a minefield, certainly aided by the AI storm that's been created, now

accessible easily, and arguably dangerously so, to anyone who could open up a search engine. And if you can open this - you can also create an account and post this content with no credit, and no filter to register the quality of how this media is produced. A horrifying reality, a world we must now live in.



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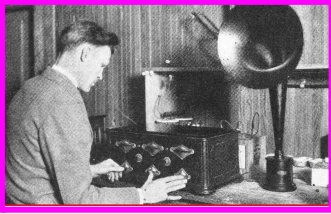
Yet, counter-culture has delved to combat this in a rather tinny, empty form of 'slow viewing' - coined by writer Daisy Jones of Vogue in 2025. It is the attempt to restrict these manufactured videos and headlines through a mindful approach to social media usage. These raindrops are reflective in the much more impactful wave of a new generational outlook. Slow fashion, 75 hard challenges, independent podcasts, app blockers such as Opal, Focus Friend, Bricks and lockboxes have now become well-known sensations for their leanings towards a life away from screentimes. It is certainly a step in the right direction, alongside the increase of vinyl records sales by 9.3% from 2024 to 2025 (as cited to Matthew Leimkuehler of Forbes Magazine)



Yet, if we are looking at a future of physical media, how can we sustain our need for instant content? Yes we can mindfully choose these formats, but they cannot tell us what is going on, what is trending, what is being released from hour to hour. The beauty of a time before ours was that there was no other way to see world events, but with the introduction of phones and the internet, came the introduction of instancy for everything, everywhere, at once, with a single click. We now, almost instinctively, crave tailored content 24/7.

I repeat - radio. I understand this may also sound like a tinny, easy cop-out to resolve all of modern media's faults (of which there are countless). Yet a well-rounded response to the gap of sustainable, instant media which is wholeheartedly human, emotional and artistic. The nature

of radio to be single-streamed, yes often flooded with advertisements, is something of an oddity in our modern reality. It gives a room a human voice which tells us the news, pop culture stories, new music releases without the overwhelming information dump that is every time we open our phones.



Noel Curran of the EBU for UNESCO World Radio day in 2023 recites, “We shouldn’t think of radio as the old grandfather grandmother sitting in the corner”, it is more than what your parents dismissively put on in the car, or to fill silence in hairdressers. Dynamic and resilient, it has over 100 years of history and is still growing stronger and stronger; something magic about this format must’ve stuck.

It’s the sense of something tangible that connects us, the comfort of both someone in a booth playing to whoever will listen, and the thought of thousands of others getting through the day all on the same frequency. Community-bound and live, it is what we lack as youth in the sinkhole of streaming (and rising costs) as it slowly swallows up our capacity to find in-person spaces to build social groups, relate to likeminded people and find our ‘village’ of support.

I can agree that oftentimes you switch to a channel and it is flooded with advertisements, tedious small talk, general chat about nothing much. But however much radio is cornered by the assumption of its ‘Muzak’ likeness (elevator music, “easy listening” inoffensive sounds to backdrop public spaces), it is a universe much bigger than this single island of streaming. To begin, UK Radio broadcasting encompasses 600 licensed stations, yet adding in the new accessibility of over 2600+ channels via internet radio solves our desire for tailored, unique content. With some digging, you will find a station that aligns with your music taste, news and humour whilst being much more up-to-date than perhaps the podcast you would play to pass the time.



Fundamentally, radio is kind to us. It isn’t obstructive or time consuming. It isn’t from a robot. It isn’t unsustainable. What it is is a format for change, for gentle listening, for a person who wants company. The true question is, will we become, once again, radio ga-ga?

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  2. Image taken from [Lost Places](#)
  3. Image taken from [British Online Archives](#)
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