



# The Arbitron Radio Listening Diary

WHY THE RADIO DIARY

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IS AN EFFECTIVE RESEARCH

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TOOL IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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THE ARBITRON  
RADIO LISTENING  
DIARY

How will the media measurement device of the future function? Ideally, it will be reliable, portable and user friendly. While Arbitron has a digital measurement device under development, we are already using a system that is reliable, portable and user friendly: the Radio Listening Diary. Like radio itself, Arbitron's Radio Listening Diary has withstood the test of time.

**Why the Diary Works So Well**

First and foremost, the diary is easy for survey participants to use: The design lends itself to the collection of radio listening over a seven-day period, it is very portable, and it has proven to be very user friendly. To ensure that almost anyone can use the diary, instructions are written so that they can be understood by someone with a sixth-grade education. The current design is the result of years of research, including working with the NAB Committee on Local Radio Audience Measurement (COLRAM) and other industry leaders.

And despite its small size and ease of use, the diary collects a lot of information about the people who fill it out. While the growing public resistance to surveys makes it difficult to ask too

many questions during a phone interview, the qualitative questions in the diary can be answered by participants at any time during the survey week and are completed by nearly all diarykeepers. In addition to qualitative information, the diary gives participants the opportunity to include comments about their radio listening, which provides stations with invaluable information on listener perceptions. To ensure effective measurement of the growing Hispanic population, we have a bilingual Spanish-English version of the diary for use in surveying the Hispanic population. It's also important to note that the diary is a relatively inexpensive measurement tool. This affordability means Arbitron can cost-effectively cover smaller markets that might not otherwise be measured.

Even more importantly, no radio research methodology commercially available today surpasses the Radio Listening Diary for dependability. Arbitron diary response rates are well ahead of other measurement services and many other general market surveys. That's why the diary continues to reign supreme as the most comprehensive and effective method for recording radio listening behavior.



### What Is the Diary?

The Arbitron Radio Listening Diary is a small foldout, pamphlet-style journal. Inside the diary, users find illustrated instructions on how to use the diary, seven journal pages (one for each day of the survey week), a page for comments, several questions on basic demographic information (such as age, sex, education, income and household size) and an "Is your diary complete?" checklist. In addition, survey participants in selected smaller markets receive diaries with five extra pages of brief demographic and lifestyle questions to provide qualitative data unavailable from other market research sources.



Participants are asked to record what radio station they heard and where they heard the radio station. At the end of the survey week the participant mails the diary back to Arbitron.

### Who Gets to Participate in an Arbitron Survey?

The Arbitron Radio Listening Diary is sent to randomly selected households that consent to participate in an Arbitron survey. Each person 12 years of age or older in the household is eligible to participate in a survey.

### How Is the Diary Used?

Each member of the household is asked to record not only what radio station they heard but also the day of the week, time of day and where they were when they heard the radio station.

This listening information is manually recorded by the survey participant on the appropriate "day page." An image of a diary day page is shown below.

### How Does the Design of the Diary Complement Arbitron's Survey Methods?

Arbitron's survey week begins on a Thursday and ends on a Wednesday. Over the years, Arbitron has documented that this midweek start date not only improves overall diary return rates but also ensures the reliable recording of weekend listening as well as weekday listening.

page is designed to allow the diary-keeper to easily keep track of:

- Daypart of listening, i.e., "Early Morning," "Midday," "Late Afternoon" or "Night"
- Start and stop times of each listening occasion
- Station identifiers
- Listening location, i.e., "At Home," "In a Car," "At Work" or "Other Place"

In addition, a positive answer is required if a respondent does not listen to radio on a given day.

| THURSDAY                     |       |       |   |                    |    |                    |          |         |             |   |
|------------------------------|-------|-------|---|--------------------|----|--------------------|----------|---------|-------------|---|
|                              | Time  |       | Station<br><small>Call letters, dial setting or station name<br/>(Don't know? Use program name)</small> | Mark <i>Z</i> once |    | Mark <i>Z</i> once |          |         |             |   |
|                              | Start | Stop  |   | AM                 | FM | At Home            | In a Car | At Work | Other Place |   |
| Early Morning<br>(from 5 AM) | 5 45  | 7 15  | KGTV  |                    | X  | X                  |          |         |             |   |
|                              | 7 15  | 7 40  | 108.5 on the dial   |                    | X  |                    | X        |         |             |   |
|                              | 9 30  |       | WGXP  | X                  |    |                    |          |         | X           |   |
| Midday                       |       |       |   |                    |    |                    |          |         |             |   |
|                              |       |       |   |                    |    |                    |          |         |             |   |
|                              |       |       |   |                    |    |                    |          |         |             |   |
| Late Afternoon               |       | 3 00  |   |                    |    |                    |          |         |             |   |
|                              | 4 20  | 4 25  | Jo Cavery Show  | X                  |    |                    |          |         |             | X |
|                              |       |       |   |                    |    |                    |          |         |             |   |
| Night<br>(to 5 AM Friday)    | 7 05  | 9 50  | KEM   | X                  |    |                    |          | X       |             |   |
|                              | 11 30 | 12 15 | SuperStars Game   |                    | X  | X                  |          |         |             |   |
|                              |       |       |   |                    |    |                    |          |         |             |   |

If you didn't hear a radio today, please mark [X] here.

The open-ended construction of the diary's day pages allows diarykeepers to record the details of each individual occasion of radio listening. The day

Diarykeepers are asked to record their radio listening for each day of the survey week. If they did not hear a radio on any given day, they simply mark the box at the bottom of the page.

## The Diary—From the Beginning to the End

Producing the most reliable radio listening estimates is not as simple a process as asking, “What did you listen to today?” There are many steps between the selection of a sampled household and the publication of the Radio Market Report; nevertheless, the Radio Listening Diary remains the center of the whole process. It is best to think of diary-related processes in terms of nine separate, yet equally important, steps:

### 1. Contact

In most cases, the first contact with potential diarykeepers is made by mail. During this mailing, the household is alerted to the upcoming call to participate in our survey. Arbitron’s Interviewing Center places more than five million calls every year to randomly selected households, soliciting their consent to participate in a survey. Prompted by a standardized script, Interviewing Center representatives speak with potential diarykeepers to ask for agreement to participate in a survey, determine survey eligibility and, in many cases, collect selected demographic information about the household and determine the number of persons in the household who are 12 and older. Online consent is now an additional option.

Bilingual interviewers in English and Spanish are available when needed.

### 2. Mailing

After a household’s survey participation is acknowledged, a package of survey materials is mailed. The package consists of the following key items (Hispanic households receive bilingual Spanish-English diaries and support materials):

- Seven-day radio listening diary for each eligible member of the household 12 and over (up to a maximum of nine persons per household)
- Easy-to-follow diary instructions
- Q&A brochure about the Arbitron survey
- Checklist
- Mailing instructions
- Thank-you letter for participation
- Cash premiums for survey participation for each person

### 3. Follow-Up Calls and Support for Diarykeepers

Arbitron provides a variety of support options to diarykeepers during the survey period to help ensure diaries are filled out correctly and returned promptly. During the survey week, Arbitron calls consenting households to see if participants have any questions and to make sure that they are filling out diaries and intend to return them on time. In addition, diarykeepers have access to a toll-free phone



support line as well as a Web site designed specifically for them: [www.arbitronratings.com](http://www.arbitronratings.com). The site contains answers to frequently asked diarykeeper questions, an explanation of survey directions, information on contacting Arbitron for help via both phone and e-mail, and some radio "fun facts."

**4. Survey Week**

Arbitron diarykeepers record their radio listening in the diary for one week and send the diary back to Arbitron's Columbia, MD, facility for processing. For a diary to be tabulated in a survey, the diarykeeper must return the diary soon after the survey week.

**5. Receipt**

Upon arrival at Arbitron's Columbia, MD, processing facility, diaries are first sorted by county and then arranged into predesignated production groups.

**6. Scanning**

Images of the diary's cover, individual day pages, qualitative pages and comments page are captured using the most current OCR (optical character recognition) technology.

Respondent data from the diary day pages are key-entered into Arbitron's master database for processing.

**7. Processing**

Arbitron's Diary Processing staff assigns credit to domestic and satellite radio stations based on the respondent data. Crediting decisions are made by reconciling the diarykeeper's response (which is captured with both OCR technology and traditional data entry practices) and Arbitron's massive Radio Station Information File. The result of this crediting process is the raw material of the Radio Market Report.

**8. Data Release**

The data are organized, sorted and tabulated for release as "Arbitrends<sup>SM</sup>" in continuously measured markets; Arbitrends is a service offered to subscribing clients that provides quarterly-trended estimates on a monthly basis prior to release of the Radio Market Report.

The data are then released in book form as the Radio Market Report and digitally through MaximiSer<sup>®</sup> and Media Professional<sup>SM</sup>.



Arbitron's Interviewing Center places more than five million calls every year to randomly selected households.

**9. Client Review**

Subscribers who wish to review the crediting process can schedule a visit to Arbitron's Client Services suite in Columbia, MD. There, using the Electronic Diary Storage and Review (EDSR) system, subscribers can view diary day page images, diary comments pages and diary processing results.



### The Evolution of the Diary and the Future of Audience Measurement

Radio stations, advertising agencies, advertisers and third-party processors across the United States have relied upon Arbitron's market research to report America's radio listening for more than 40 years. To keep pace with changing consumer behavior, technological advancements and the evolving needs of our customers, Arbitron is continually striving to improve our measurement service with research and development in such areas as:

- Maintaining the industry's highest average diary survey response rates
- Providing sample sizes to reliably measure markets
- Increasing the sample representation of young males
- Maintaining excellent representation of the black and Hispanic populations
- Providing important lifestyle information, such as the zip code of place of employment
- Collecting key demographic data to better describe radio audiences

Arbitron has also launched several new initiatives to remain at the forefront of media audience measurement. Some of these are:

### The Portable People Meter

The Portable People Meter (PPM<sup>SM</sup>) is a revolutionary audience measurement system that tracks a consumer's exposure to electronic media: radio stations; broadcast, cable and satellite television outlets; and the Internet. The PPM is a cell phone-sized device that consumers wear throughout the day. It works by detecting inaudible identification codes that can be embedded in the audio portion of any transmission. Whenever a survey participant is exposed to an encoded station's audio, the meter automatically registers that station's unique ID code. At the end of the day, the survey participant places the meter in a special docking station that sends the collected station ID data back to Arbitron. The PPM has been tested in more than 15 countries. Its capabilities were demonstrated in an extensive market trial and extended research in Philadelphia and are be-



The Portable People Meter

Arbitron's unique encoding technology was packaged to fit in the real world of broadcast equipment, personal meters and household recharging units.



ing confirmed in Houston. The PPM technology is being used as a media measurement tool in a number of countries.

#### **RADAR (Radio's All Dimension Audience Research)**

RADAR® is a national radio ratings service that measures audiences to radio commercials aired on 40 radio networks nationwide operated by ABC Radio Networks, American Urban Radio Networks, Crystal Media Networks, Dial Communications - Global Media, Inc., Jones MediaAmerica Rado Network, Premiere Radio Networks and Westwood One Radio Networks. RADAR reports are based on an annual sample of more than 70,000 radio diaries.

RADAR provides the radio network industry with the benefits of larger sample sizes, common audience estimates for local and network buying and selling, and the opportunity to unify software applications to further facilitate buying radio.

#### **Nationwide**

Arbitron provides audience estimates for network radio and syndicated programs via our Nationwide service. Nationwide supplies market-by-market and national audience estimates two times a year.

#### **Arbitron Internet Broadcast Services**

The Arbitron Internet Broadcast Services division helps Internet broadcasters, advertisers and advertising agencies understand streaming media and the way consumers use it. Since 1998, Arbitron has released a dozen landmark studies on webcasting and Internet usage and is committed to providing breakthrough research that tracks the



impact of the Internet on consumers and media. Along with the Scarborough research, which this division provides to the market to help Internet broadcasters document the value of their audience for specific advertisers, the group also markets custom research solutions to help broadcasters address specific business issues.

#### **Beyond the Numbers in the Book**

While there are no universal behavior patterns for the way diarykeepers record listening information, some trends are apparent. Here are a few interesting facts about Arbitron's radio diary/entries:

- Forty-two percent (42%) use a frequency only, such as 98.5 or 1500, to identify a station; 18 percent use call letters only, such as WGXP-AM, to identify a station.
- Eight percent (8%) use a Station Name only, such as "98 Rock," to identify a station.
- Nineteen percent (19%) use a Station Name as one of the station identifiers.

- Less than one-half of one percent of all diary entries are program titles, personality names or sports teams.
- The average diary contains 15 entries of listening data.
- In 2003, Arbitron mailed 2.6 million diaries, and more than 1.3 million were processed for inclusion in our sample.
- The following Arbitron services are accredited by the Media Rating Council (MRC): quarterly local market reports, MaximiSer, Media Professional, Custom Survey Area Reports (CSARs), and County Coverage. The MRC performs annual audits to ensure that accredited services adhere to MRC standards and procedures.

#### **Do You Want to Learn More?**

For more information on Arbitron's radio estimates, local Radio Market Reports, client software, technical support or audience measurement methodologies, please contact your Arbitron sales representative or visit the Arbitron Web site at [www.arbitron.com](http://www.arbitron.com).



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