

Radio: Industry and Audience – Radio 1 Live Lounge



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Industry: Production and distribution

The Radio One Live Lounge is a live music series that is hosted on BBC Radio 1 and BBC Radio 1Xtra (known as 1Xtra) by Clara Amfo (since May 2015). It was initially hosted by Jo Whiley on her mid-morning radio show until 2009, when Fearne Cotton took over. 2009 also saw Trevor Nelson hosting Live Lounges on his Radio 1Xtra Show, but he has since been replaced by DJ Ace (2017).

1Xtra is a digital radio channel, whereas Radio 1 is available both via analogue and digitally.

Clara Amfo has a background as a presenter for Nickelodeon and CBBC. She interned in marketing at KISS FM and was nominated in 2012 for a Sony Radio Award as a 'Rising Star'. She joined BBC Radio 1Xtra as a host of the weekend breakfast show and joined the MTV chart shows. In 2015 she became the host of The Official Chart on BBC Radio 1 - crossing over from 1Xtra - and later went on to host the Live Lounge (hosted on both Radio 1 and 1Xtra). She has since presented Top of The Pops and presented The Year in Music 2017 with Claudia Winkleman.

Being hosted by Radio 1 and 1Xtra allows artists to be broadcast across two of the radio platforms - either to a more niche audience or enabling a wider audience for a band.

The Live Lounge is also the name of a room in the Radio 1 studios where many of the performances are broadcast. Live Lounge performances are also broadcast from the larger BBC Maida Vale Studios (London).

Artists are filmed in an intimate radio studio, acoustically, often with little production rehearsal. They normally perform one or two of their own songs and then a unique cover from an A List Radio 1 artist who has had a release in the last six to nine months. Artists normally perform a cover song that is a contrast to their known genre. One of the most recognised examples is the 'jazz' artist (and now Radio 2 host) Jamie Cullum's version of Pharrell Williams' 'Frontin' (11 Feb 2004).

The audio is then broadcast on their Radio platforms and the 'visualisation' online. You can find the BBC Academy 'Behind the Scenes in The Radio 1 Live Lounge' film here: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/academy/en/articles/art20141203130927858>. This BBC Academy video explains how the Live Lounge aims to 'make radio visual'. This allows Radio 1 and 1Xtra to cross media platforms.

The website for the Live Lounge includes direct links to both Radio 1 and 1Xtra (to allow users easy migration to their main radio stations), videos, photographic galleries and a summary of the Live Lounge Month (a month where the Live Lounge production team list some of the biggest names in music). In September 2017 this included: Foo Fighters, Chris Martin (Coldplay), Pink, Harry Styles, Stormzy, Miley Cyrus (live from LA), Jay-Z, Rita Ora, Lorde and Sam Smith.





There is now an annual 'BBC Radio 1 Live Lounge' compilation that is released by Sony CMG. Volume 1 was initially released in October 2006 and is available as a CD or a digital download. For a breakdown of each year's artists, please use this Wikipedia link: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Live_Lounge#Performances_and_albums

Radio 1 and 1Xtra live streams are available outside the UK via the iPlayer Radio App.

Since 2014 Radio 1 has also had its own dedicated video channel on the BBC iPlayer, which includes videos of Live Lounge performances.

Industry: Ownership and funding

The Live Lounge is produced by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and broadcast on BBC Radio 1 and 1Xtra.

The BBC has 10 radio stations covering the whole of the UK (including Radio 1 and 1Xtra), 6 stations in the 'national regions' of Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, and 40 local radio stations serving defined areas of England. Each station has a different remit, content, style and target audience.



Industry: Producers

Mark Ian Strippel ('Markie Mark') is the Head of Programmes for both the BBC Asian Network and 1Xtra. Strippel, a British-Asian, is a well-known figure in the music industry and has broadcast on both stations. At his appointment, he was keen to support a new direction for the Asian Network, to encourage more home-grown talent and live music. Read more here: http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2006/01_january/17/asian.shtml

Strippel has also recently announced a new line-up for 2018, with a host of new resident DJs to ensure that the 1Xtra audience is offered well-known club legends. Read more here: <https://radiotoday.co.uk/2017/11/bbc-radio-1xtra-has-announced-four-new-djs/>

Audience: Changes in audience

The way people are listening to music is changing. This has affected Radio 1 in particular. See here: <http://www.nme.com/blogs/nme-blogs/mythbusting-radio-1-losing-500000-listeners-half-story-1971412#rU> People aged between 15-24 listened to just over 14 hours of radio per week last year - seven hours less than the average adult, and 15% less than they did a decade earlier, according to broadcasting regulator Ofcom. Radio 1 is suffering because its core audience is turning away from live radio. This is largely thanks to the arrival of streaming services.

Both Radio 1 and 1Xtra are aimed at the 'youth brand'. The presenters, content and live content should also reflect their service agreements and remits.

Interestingly, although Radio 1 has been losing listeners (externally cited as result of Nick Grimshaw's breakfast show), 1Xtra is celebrating an increase in figures - and the highest ever for its breakfast show. Read more here: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-41752088>

The BBC Media Centre said 'BBC Radio 1Xtra has 1.14m listeners (aged 10+), compared to 1.08m last quarter and 1.09m last year'. Radio 6 Music, another digital channel, aimed at alternative music fans, has also recorded an increase in listening figures for 2017 to a record 2.43 million listeners.

Bob Shennan, Director of BBC Radio and Music, says: 'These are great results for BBC 6 Music which is one of the most exciting radio innovations in the last twenty years and is second to none for its brilliant roster of music curators across the schedule. It's pleasing to see

continued growth of all our digital stations with their unique range of programming from classic comedy and sports to urban music and specialist DJs.'

This compares with BBC Radio 1 having a reach of '10.5m listeners aged 10+' (from 10.5m last quarter and down from 10.9m last year). The same data shows that Radio 1 has '9.7 million listeners aged 15+' (up from 9.59m last quarter and down from 9.87m last year) while the network's share of listening was 5.9% (down from 6.2% last quarter and 6% last year).

Audience: Categorisation

The RAJAR (Radio Joint Audience Research) is the official body that both measures and categorises Radio audiences in the UK. The BBC and RadioCentre own it on behalf of the commercial sector. It is expensive to subscribe to, but newspaper articles often cite its figures to illustrate the changing demographic and audience listening figures.

The remit of Radio 1 is to entertain and engage a "broad range of young listeners with a distinctive mix of contemporary music and speech", including live music and support for emerging talent. The target audience is 15-29 year olds, but it should also provide some content for younger people. Here is the Radio 1 Service Agreement: http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/regulatory_framework/service_licences/radio/2016/radio1_dec16.pdf

The remit of 1Xtra is to "play the best in contemporary black music with a strong emphasis on live music and supporting new UK artists" including a "bespoke news service, regular discussion programmes and specially commissioned documentaries relevant to the young target audience (15-24 year olds)". These should include but not be exclusive to ethnic minorities, particularly - although not exclusively - those from ethnic minorities. 'We issue each BBC service a service licence, setting out what we expect it to achieve and how much it can spend.' Here is the 1Xtra Service Agreement: http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/regulatory_framework/service_licences/radio/2016/1xtra_apr16.pdf

1Xtra is aimed at fans of urban music. It is broadcast from the 8th floor of New Broadcasting House, as is Radio 1 and BBC Asian Network. This is important as since the middle of 2017, 1Xtra management is shared also by that of BBC Asian Network.

Audience interaction

The BBC says that audiences still engage with the Live Lounge and that linked apps and social media platforms, YouTube and Facebook, illustrate this. As you would expect, the platforms use convergence to repost and share information.

Like many BBC Radio shows, the hosts encourage listeners to tweet, comment and share posts during the shows - this can include being able to send in questions to the bands, or for the hosts to ask the artists questions. Videos and information (including photo galleries) are then reposted after the shows to circulate more interest and create a collective response from those that were listening at the time. This encourages a community feel and a further forum for fans.

Current figures for the Live Lounge include:

- Facebook = over 32K <https://www.facebook.com/liveloungethealbum/>
- Radio 1 Twitter = over 3M followers, but the Live Lounge only has just over 1K <https://twitter.com/bbcr1?lang=en>
- YouTube = Over 61M views <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL1CA6335E0D3699B6>

This blog, albeit a few years old now, illustrates how the BBC are able to use online platforms to help engage audiences with both Radio 1 and 1Xtra: http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/bbcinternet/2011/09/radio_1_1xtra_uxd_design_home.html



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