

Please PIPEDOWN

The source for news about the campaign for freedom from piped music.



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Hello Pipedown Supporters

As I have started traveling on business again, I have noticed the vast array of media directed at captive audiences. The captive audience is the traveler as well as the transportation worker, both needing to be in a specific location due to the way our transportation centers are set up. These travelers are mostly waiting around, so they make the perfect captive audience. The selected media contains both program audio and television with its associated soundtracks.

One predominant feature of the captive audience program audio is the incorporation of commercial content, advertising the services of travel related businesses. Hotel lobbies are often filled with music, but the music is just a sidelight. What most often accompanies the music selections are advertisements for the hotel, as if the hotel guest needs reminding to use this same hotel chain the next time he or she travels.

This is unlike printed advertisements on products provided on airplanes, in airports, at hotels, and accompanying rental car material. The auditory advertisement is difficult to avoid. I can choose to not look at both the airline name and the soft drink company, whose logos are embossed on opposite sides of the plastic drink cup offered on the plane. I can glance once at these or choose not to notice, but it is difficult to ignore the advertisements mixed in with the music.

Comments on Society: Auditory Versus Visual

One relative is an artist and her focus is so visual that she thought she was recommending a quiet restaurant. The restaurant was relatively quiet, but both my husband and I noticed exactly what music was playing in the background. Until we brought up the fact that there was music, my relative did not even notice it was there. On another occasion I tested my co-workers' awareness when leaving a restaurant by asking them if they could tell me the titles or artists of any of the songs we had heard at lunchtime. One of my companions told me the names of two of the songs. The other companion asked "Was there music playing?"

Some people truly do not notice the program audio seeping into their environment. They may be very good at multi-tasking and do not allow auditory input to penetrate their awareness, They may be focused on the visual aspects of their environment and auditory aspects do not matter very much.

Comment Cards

If you receive your copy of Please Pipedown electronically, you can still obtain comment cards by sending a Self Addressed Stamped Envelope to the post office address above.

News from readers

The increase in televisions in public places like gasoline stations is mentioned by readers. Again, the motor vehicle fuel consumer (gas buyer) makes a perfect captive audience.

Advice:

Recently I informed an employee of one of the national office supply stores that I was cutting my shopping trip short because of the loud music. The response was that they had no control over the noise. The employee tried to gain my sympathy by stating that she had to listen to it too, every day.

I asked the employee if it might benefit us both by letting their manager know that one customer left without purchasing a couple hundred dollars worth of electronic supplies. I spent \$20 instead of \$200. My intention is to eventually write to the company and to complain about their in-store noise. I will include copies of receipts from the store where I did spend the money.

But thinking about this typical response of “we have no control over it” made me think of something to say back to the employee, the manager, and the store owner. It might make some sense to explain to the store representative that “Maybe it is time you took control back by telling the company management that your customers don’t want or appreciate this noise.” Perhaps we should be asking the local store managers to increase their accountability to the customer.

I would be interested in hearing from readers if they have any effect by turning the no control excuse around back to the store management. The businesses know they need to be accountable to their management and perhaps gentle reminders about responsibility to their customers needs to be brought into focus.

Quote:

“Soon silence will have passed into legend. Man has turned his back on silence. Day after day he invents machines and devices that increase noise and distract humanity from the essence of life, contemplation, meditation. . . . Tooting, howling, screeching, booming, crashing, whistling, grinding, and trilling bolster his ego. His anxiety subsides. His inhuman void spreads monstrously like a gray vegetation.” - Jean Arp

Bibliography:

“The Age of Access: The New Culture of Hypercapitalism Where all of Life is a Paid-for Experience” by Jeremy Rifkin, Tarcher/Putnam, 2000, ISBN 1-58542-018-2, also available in paperback.

Although not tied directly to the program audio sphere, Rifkin does mention music commercialization relating to the marketing, distribution, and modification of music for mass consumption. The other aspects of these discussions includes how the economy absorbs the culture behind the music and overpowers it.

On-Line Article:

One reader came across an interesting on-line article from many years ago. “Turn the Music Off!” by Mark Mercury can be found on the following web page:

http://www.markmercury.com/writings/turn_the_music_off.html