

Please PIPEDOWN

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



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Newsletter Number 9
January 2010
Ruth Schiedermayer, editor

Hello Pipedown Supporters

One reader wrote to me about hopes for continued research on the effects of noise (including forms of program audio) on people. Certainly we would all like to know more about the unintended consequences of the ubiquitous program audio filling public spaces. Many are aware of the problems noise and program audio have on simple communication, especially with those having hearing issues.

An example of research that examined noise in general and background TV and radio in particular was a study by Auburn University in 2002. This study linked high noise levels, poor lighting, and understaffing to pharmacy prescription errors.

I would like to recommend Google scholar for finding out about current studies about noise. Searching takes some practice finding the exact keywords. This search has features to narrow down which years to search and whether to restrict the searches by area of study. <http://scholar.google.com/>

There are areas of research that could still be addressed if researchers have an interest in those topics. Unfortunately at this time there are insufficient funds available from non-profits concerned with limiting the impacts of noise on all of us. Other sources of funding are needed and must be sought.

Comments on Society Attention tones

One unintended consequence of having a steady stream of program audio coming at you, shows up in noisier environments like airports. When announcements need to break through the general noisy background, they are often delivered with extra noise.

Attention tones are sometimes heard in those cases where the person using the paging system presses a couple of extra phone keypad keys before speaking the announcement. This then adds more beeps to the announcement in addition to any "attention" the person might speak. This use of attention tones is quickly picked up by other users. The final result is loud music plus loud attention tones plus loud announcements.

While sitting in a Midwest airport a couple years ago waiting for our flight to board, we waited at a very noisy gate. There was the constant foreground music being played and nearly every single announcement was preceded by one, two, or three sharp beeps.

Comment Cards

The Pipedown USA comment cards are not the only comment cards available. There are also on-line versions of comment cards from other anti-noise organizations should those be suitable to readers as well.

For more details about either source of comment cards, please email me.

News from readers

Another term for the nearly universal program audio comes from a reader: sonic spam. Another reader suggests music abuse.

A term found in Dr. Klaus Miehling's "Violence Music" weekly newsletter is Zwangsbeschallung which translates (using Google translate) as "acoustic pressure"

Advice: Talk amongst yourselves

There is one technique that might be useful to help bring more awareness of the presence of piped-in music to others. My husband and I have practiced this with mixed results. We sometimes comment to each other about the presence of music, especially if it is loud, while we are in a store or while we are leaving a store. People look at us, but that is OK, because we want them to hear what we are saying. We hope that by occasionally talking out loud about the obnoxious music presence, a few more people within earshot may recognize the music is there.

At one time, I did not have a quiet grocery store anywhere near where I lived. Each time my husband and I would visit one of these national chain grocery stores we would complain to the store manager about the too-loud level of the program audio. On several occasions, we spent time talking out loud to each other about how loud and obnoxious the in-store music was. We did this as we were leaving with a cart full of groceries. We continued our "discussions" well into the parking lot.

Most of us are pretty good at focusing on what is important to us. We do this instinctively and often do not pay attention to things going on around us. Many of us will not notice negative things until someone points them out to us. This also applies to program audio. Perhaps readers could use the technique of talking to each other to bring more awareness to the fact this noise is everywhere.

Quote:

"Where you want to have slaves, there you should have as much music as possible."

Quoted from Tolstoy to Gorky about a certain German princeling, quoted from the article "Open Ears" by R. Murray Schafer in "Soundscape: The Journal of Acoustic Ecology", Volume 4, Number 2 Fall/Winter 2003 - International Symposium, Melbourne

Bibliography:

Janet Horvath has recently updated her book "Playing (less) Hurt: An Injury Prevention Guide for Musicians" Details about the book and about Ms. Horvath's experiences can be found on the web site:

<http://www.playinglesshurt.com/>

Janet Horvath's whitepaper "Hear no Evil" is also available on-line. 13 steps to help prevent hearing loss includes "Turn down volumes on everything and avoid unnecessary exposure to loud noise."

The whitepaper can be found at:

<http://www.playinglesshurt.com/hear-no-evil.html>

In the works

As always, I hope to hear from readers. I've been collecting research articles concerning noise added by television and music in the background and am always interested in reading further on this topic.

Should anyone have access to or references to specific articles they have read, either in printed media or on-line, I would be very interested in adding that information to my collection. Please feel free to forward information on articles, books, magazines, videos, or other media that references the problem of too much program audio. I can be reached by USPS or email.