5.1. 'Old punks don't die, they stand at the back'... and make radio: 1990s anarcho-punk and the continuation of DIY values in contemporary radio practice

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Abstract
The accessible, Do-It-Yourself (DIY) nature of radio technology lends itself to innovation and activism (Douglas, 1999, p. 357), contributing to its status as the "epitome of alternative media" (Waltz, 2005, p. 36). *Radioactive International* is an online radio station providing over 1750 hours of free, on demand, alternative radio and hosting almost forty independently produced programmes from around the world. Developing from the 1990s Dublin anarcho-punk scene, it remains grounded in the DIY ethos of anti-capitalist freedom of expression. *Radioactive International* is one example from a growing number of DIY radio programmes and formats produced by original participants of 1980s and 1990s anarcho-punk, now in their forties and fifties. This research draws on interviews with individual producers to explore the links between punk and radio amongst older DIY activists. Making radio is considered as a natural extension of ongoing multiplatform DIY punk practice, demonstrating a lifetime commitment to DIY politics and values.

Keywords: alternative media, radio, DIY, punk.

1. Introduction

The accessible, Do-It-Yourself (DIY) nature of radio technology lends itself to innovation and activism (Douglas, 1999, p. 357), contributing to its status as "the epitome of alternative media" (Waltz, 2005, p. 36). *Radioactive International* is an online radio station providing over 1750 hours of free, on demand, alternative radio, and hosting almost forty independently produced programmes from around the world. Developing from the 1990s Dublin anarcho-punk scene, it remains grounded in the DIY ethos of anti-capitalist freedom of expression. *Radioactive International* is one example from a growing number of DIY radio programmes and formats produced by original participants of 1980s and 1990s anarcho-punk, now in their forties and fifties.

There are clear parallels between the evolution of radio and punk culture. As Sue Carpenter states in her account of pirate radio involvement in the United States, both are concerned with issues of individual freedom, expression and identity (2004, p. 164). Equally, the history of both was shaped by DIY practice to bypass and counteract institutional, commercial and corporate control. Yet there is a lack of academic study which establishes an explicit link between the two. Through interviews with individual producers, this research explores the relationship between punk and radio for a particular generation of DIY activists. This focus on the ways they talk about their motivations and participation recognises the performative function of discourse, as governing the way "a topic can be meaningfully talked about and reasoned about" (Hall, 1997, p. 15). For all involved, making radio is considered as a natural extension of ongoing multiplatform DIY punk practice, including fanzines, music production, and political activism, demonstrating a lifetime commitment to DIY politics and values. It presents a snapshot of radio practice that illustrates the enduring ability of DIY activists to adapt new technologies in order to share ideas and music, expand existing networks and maintain independent control of production and distribution.

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2. DIY radio

The radio discussed here stems from the 1980s, a pivotal time for both punk and radio activism. To provide a background to the activity, it is useful to establish the historic subversive credentials of the medium before connecting current DIY online radio to alternative and radical media theory. The history of radio is "the history of the fight by everyday people to gain access to the airwaves" (Coyer, 2007, p. 111). The political and cultural significance of the medium has been recognised since its inception. Following its emergence during the First World War, governments and industry were quick to harness and regulate radio to inform public values, opinions and tastes. Conversely, early practitioners and radical theorists including Bertolt Brecht, Walter Benjamin and Theodore Adorno explored radio's possibilities for building a public sphere (Hartley, 2000, p. 155). Rather than existing as a one-sided instrument of distribution, Brecht recognised radio's potential to actively engage citizens in public life, with the ability to become "the most wonderful public communication system imaginable" (1979 [1932], p. 25). Brecht's utopian vision of two-way communication may not have been fully achieved, yet the development of radio production and distribution technologies shows the ongoing shift toward more participatory models.

Radio is undergoing a dramatic transformation in the digital era, redefined through the growth of online distribution and increasing affordability of production technology. Yet where media democratisation is most often attributed to the digital revolution, the adaptability and accessibility of radio technology has defined its history. It has remained relatively affordable to make, transmit, and listen to, contributing to its enduring position as the most pervasive and democratic media worldwide (Hendy, 2000). Yet David Hendy highlights the challenges in theorising radio, complicated by the ever-increasing quantity and range of activity, including the rapid expansion of online radio. The dynamic, fast pace of change makes it difficult to pin down and categorise effectively, "it changes too quickly to let us 'see' it properly" (Hendy, 2000, p. 5). As Susan J. Douglas argues, radio's ability to reinvent itself so frequently means that corporate control can never grasp it completely (1999).

The ability to bypass and counteract corporate, commercial and governmental control is central to DIY values and practice. Similarly, the rapid concentration of global commercial media power has led to a proliferation of media produced outside of the mainstream. Mitzi Waltz provides an analysis of alternative and activist media, connecting its contemporary growth and significance to an increase of corporate media ownership, reducing the range of voices heard within the mainstream. Where mainstream media "has never been more in thrall to corporate power, and has never been less trusted by its readers and viewers", media outside the mainstream has markedly increased (Waltz, 2005, p. 1). Whether despite, or because of this, alternative and activist media continue to flourish, "opening cracks in the mass-media monolith through which strange flowers grow" (Waltz, 2005, p.x).

DIY online radio fits within the broadest categorisation of alternative media (Atton, 2002) whilst also connecting to theories of activist (Waltz, 2005) and radical media (Downing, 2001). Chris Atton's arguably definitive theory of alternative media encompasses all cultural forms of independent production. Where the product of mainstream media supports and reinforces powerful and influential elites through representations which marginalise and disempower other groups, alternative media is a response that begins to redress the balance of power through facilitating alternative values, opinions and frameworks. The social, cultural and political value of alternative media lies in the ability to challenge the symbolic power of media institutions. Atton focusses on the texts themselves whilst also acknowledging the principles of organisation, production and social relations through which they are created, an approach that is "as much concerned with how it is organised within its socio-cultural context as with its subject matter" (2002, p. 9).

The approach helps to frame a diverse range of non-mainstream, non-commercial practice and output. Yet where the 'alternative' label is a broad one, radical media theory is a useful addition

for exploring the counter-hegemonic aims of DIY punk radio. Where Atton primarily focusses on the discourses created through alternative media, John Downing prioritises the processes through which they are produced. He uses case studies to demonstrate the extent to which social movements organise media that challenge traditional authority patterns and disrupt the political order. Content is not necessarily explicitly radical or activist in nature, instead social movements constitute an active form of audience, expressing "oppositional strands, overt and covert, within popular cultures" (Downing, 2001, p. 3).

Discussion of alternative, activist and radical media theory demonstrates that cultural production outside the mainstream is difficult to categorise. Furthermore, such attempts to attribute normative labels to countercultural movements can be counter-productive, undermining their subversive potential. Ian Glasper highlights this risk in his history of early anarcho-punk, recognising that definitions can "leech away much of its power by stuffing it into a neat pigeonhole, where, once classified, it can be more easily controlled" (2006, p. 6). Instead, the aim here is to understand the motivations and meanings of making radio in the terms of the producers themselves. All participants link their cultural production to initial involvement with 1990s anarcho-punk, a social movement based on DIY values, political activism and diverse musical genres. These principles continue to be reflected in the contemporary radio produced, content that is defined by punk values and ethics rather than a specific music genre.

3. Background & scope

The focus of the research stems from my own involvement. I was a member of the 1990s anarcho-punk scene as a fanzine producer, gig promoter and ska-punk band member, and DIY politics and values have continued to be a major influence throughout my life. Now as a radio producer, teacher and researcher specialising in alternative and community media, I identified a growing number of online radio programmes developing from 1990s anarcho-punk. I became interested in the link between older punks and radio, and what it indicates about DIY and radio practice today. It is a reflexive research position which complements the study of alternative media, a field which can never be definitive or fully comprehensive. As Atton argues, all instances of independent cultural practice can only be considered in relation to historical, cultural, economic and political context (2015, p. 9). Instead, he calls for reflexive engagement through direct involvement and active participation which provide opportunities for "critical thinking that is situated in the real world" (2015, p. 10). The focus on the way that DIY punk radio producers talk about their involvement recognises the subtle ways in which language not only orders perceptions, but how it makes things happen, showing how language is used to "construct and create social interaction and diverse social worlds" (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 1). The result is not only to catalogue a variety of production methods and formats but also to explore some of the complex and changing meanings around DIY, punk and radio from the perspectives of those involved.

Radioactive International provides a useful starting point for understanding the ways in which punk networks are engaging with radio. I start by outlining the origins and evolution of the station before discussing common themes identified through the accounts of individual radio producers. *Radioactive International* shows include *Freedom Fry Hi/Fi*, produced independently in Philadelphia, United States; *The Hope Show* and *Easy Snappin',* produced independently in Dublin, Ireland; and *The Liquidizer*, broadcast live on 100.5 WOWfm community radio station in South Australia. In addition, programmes uploaded on Mixcloud help to demonstrate the diversity of platforms and practice throughout a wider punk radio network. These include *Under the Pavement*, broadcast live on ALLFM96.9 community radio station in Manchester, UK; and *Radio Weirdo* produced independently in Plymouth, United Kingdom. Methods vary from a small team at a local community radio station to a single producer using a laptop at home, demonstrating the diversity that is a key feature of DIY practice. As Kevin Dunn argues through his study of DIY record labels, this diversity

"is part of what distinguishes it as a mode of production from corporate mass production" (2012, p. 222).

4. Anarcho-Punk & free radio beginnings

Radioactive International is described as a freeform online radio station which hosts over forty shows from around the world including Ireland, United Kingdom, United States, Australia, Canada, Spain, Netherlands and Norway. Radio producers subscribe to an open platform and upload audio to the live stream through a Wordpress Content Management System, with each show archived for on-demand access. Over 1750 hours of free, independent radio shows are combined with live broadcasts from gigs and events including *Conflict* and *Subhumans* at the Button Factory, *The Rockin Road Festival,* and the *GGI Festival* in Mayo. The principles of independent organisation, production and distribution define the station more than musical style and genre with content ranging from punk, metal, ska, reggae, trance, alt-country, northern soul, blues and jazz to historical and political recordings. Editorial freedom is central, there are no formats, playlists or genres that participants have to adhere to. Instead, involvement is determined by the main rule of "no fascists, racists, sexists, homophobes or religious presenters" (radioactiveinternational.org).

Radioactive started as a FM pirate station in July 1992, broadcast from a flat in Dublin's north inner-city. The station was born out of the city's anarcho-punk scene and a frustration with the lack of punk and alternative programming on other stations. The beginnings of the pirate station are inextricably linked to live music and directly supported through benefit gigs by bands such as *Striknien D.C.* and *Stomach.* As early broadcaster and current Production Co-ordinator, Jo Greene highlights, music and the DIY punk ethos brought people together, "I was going to a lot of gigs in Dublin, but of course none of this music was being played on the radio. *Radioactive* was a way of giving people a voice, you didn't need a qualification or a job title to share your love of music and ideas" (18.12.2015).

Founder and Technical Co-ordinator, Dónal Greene, connects the *Radioactive* story to the joint influences of anarcho-punk and the free radio movement (23.07.2015). He refers to early experimentation with Citizens Band and pirate radio during the 1970s and 1980s and identifies his involvement with anarcho-punk in the late 1980s as a turning point, when one particular anarchist pamphlet grabbed his interest. *Radio is My Bomb — a DIY Manual for Pirates* (1987) was the manifesto of the free radio movement of the time. Where Dónal already had the technical expertise, he cites the guide as a major influence on the development of *Radioactive*, "What got me was how radio could be used to organise communities and disseminate ideas and ideologies (…) the pamphlet inspired me to build a station that gave the airwaves to the people that don't get represented by the mainstream media" (23.07.2015). The title of the guide is taken from a quote by Chantal Paternostre, a Belgian anarchist from Radio Air Libre, a pirate radio station in Brussels. She was arrested on 15 August 1985 and reportedly answered "radio is my bomb" to charges of arson and bombing. After more than a year, most of which in solitary confinement, the charges were dropped and she was released (1987, p. 1). Together with practical information, the guide presents a range of political activist radio stations operating across the globe. Formats and operational models are varied and content is defined by political ideas, with stations described variously as "anarchist", "activism", "far-left", "anti-fascist", "feminist" and "radical" (1987).

Radio is My Bomb sets out to encourage and network like-minded people to set up their own stations, calling for a "new wave of local pirates" using radio as a two-way means of political participation. This idea draws on Brecht's early recognition of the potential of radio (1979 [1932]). Rather than existing as a one-sided instrument of distribution, he considered radio as an opportunity for building a public sphere and for promoting the development of civil society, allowing direct contact with the people whilst bypassing the ideological apparatuses of the state (Hartley, 2000, p. 155). The free radio movement extends this vision, not only bypassing, but directly opposing commercial and governmental control. *Radio is My Bomb* makes a clear

distinction between a countercultural free radio movement and the more commercially driven music pirates and community stations of the time, whose aim was to achieve mainstream legitimacy. Instead, focus was on giving a voice to the voiceless, "to see ethnic radio, women's radio, tenants, unions, anarchists, community groups, old people, prisoners, pacifists, urban guerrillas, gays, straights and of course every possible variety of musical entertainment" (Hooligan Press, 1987, p. 2).

The accounts of *Radioactive* founders and participants demonstrate a clear link between the collaborative and countercultural aims of both the anarcho-punk and free radio movements (Dónal Greene, 23.07.2015). In 1994, Dónal Greene published an update to the free radio manual, *Radio is Our Bomb* (www.dojo.ie/active/bomb.htm) which demonstrates the importance of alternative knowledge-sharing within DIY communities (Hemphill & Leskowitz, 2012). The guide includes updated and extended technical instructions to arm radio activists with the tools to create independent stations (1994). In encouraging participation, it stresses the importance of building networks of like-minded people whilst the addition of "our" to the title emphasises the collective principles of DIY punk radio.

The late 1980s and early 1990s was a pivotal era for anarcho-punk and marked a time of experimentation in anarchist free radio which has paved the way for alternative media projects today. The interdependence between alternative media and social and political movements is rarely explored (Dowmunt, 2007, p. 10) and examination of the links between free radio and anarcho-punk are particularly relevant for the understanding of contemporary DIY punk radio practice. Both were based in anti-capitalist protest and direct action, including hunt saboteurs, squatters and travellers rights, the free party movement, road protests, and anti-fascism (McKay, 1998). These shared political beliefs and values were more defining than specific music style and genre. As Glasper states, "bands were bound together more by their ethics than any unwritten musical doctrine (…) influences taken from everywhere from meandering folk via raging hardcore to arty noise and back again. 'No rules!' was the only real mantra, after all" (2006, p. 9).

Digital production and broadcast technologies are constantly adapting and becoming increasingly accessible. This dynamic, fast pace of change makes radio difficult to pin down and categorise effectively, leading to challenges in understanding the future of radio as it adjusts, embraces the internet and continues to generate a new language and narrative (Gazi, Starkey & Jedrzejewksi, 2011, p. 17). The *Radioactive* story illustrates this "technical insurgency" (Hendy, 2000, p. 5), with Dónal Greene outlining an ongoing process of experimentation leading to the launch of the online service. *Radioactive International* was facilitated by developments in web audio for programme distribution, combined with the increasing accessibility of digital recording, editing and file-sharing techniques for individual producers. The democratisation of media and communications is primarily attributed to such technological developments and the growth of the internet. However, DIY punk practice shows that the technology is the tool, not the cause of independent cultural production. The qualities of collaboration, creativity and resourcefulness have long driven the innovative use of available technologies. For instance, 1950s skiffle music is recognised as an early DIY movement and precursor to 1970s punk (Spencer, 2008; McKay, 1998) with people in the post-Depression era US adapting available domestic objects, from washboards to broomsticks, to get together and play music. Similarly, the technological experimentation and innovation that has facilitated the development of *Radioactive International* is driven by collective political, musical and social aims.

During the pirate FM broadcasts, the internet was in its infancy, slow, expensive and difficult to access. Yet the station is described as 'seizing' the technology to spread the word beyond Dublin (Dónal Greene, 17.08.2015). Rather than one-way promotion, the website is described as a communication tool for encouraging involvement, and emails from bands quickly began to come in from around the world with music sent in soon after. For *Radioactive,* the internet represented an opportunity to build on the established practice of sharing information, ideas and music through

independent DIY networks. It is presented as an extension of the existing use of letter writing and distribution catalogues such as *Book Your Own Fuckin' Life*.

The FM broadcasts ended in 1994, yet Dónal outlines a process of ongoing experimentation, with participants recognising new technology as the future of broadcasting for small independent radio stations due to low setup costs, no need for transmitter antennas or studio equipment, no legal and license issues, and easier listener involvement (17.08.2015). The station's experimental approach to technology is described in the same terms as tape-sharing, used to further punk DIY aims of free access and distribution. However, the ideas were often too early for the technology. In 1995, the process of encoding wav files to real audio format was slow and complex, taking two days to process one hour of audio. Keen to explore the potential of online audio, *Radioactive* made the significant investment of £1000 to upgrade the station's computer and released an album online by Kilkenny band, *Engine Alley* (Billboard Magazine, 28.10.1995). As the internet was too slow for streaming, individual tracks were available to download then play for free. By 2010, web access and capacity had advanced dramatically and a pop-up internet station was set up to support the growing anti-austerity movement, representing the continued political and countercultural aims of free radio. For *Radioactive,* recordings of marches, rallies and speeches represented an abundance of content to agitate for mass protests (Dónal Greene, 17.08.2015). The station ran automated, with the latest content played on loop. Whilst it failed to gain momentum, it is recognised as a trial for the current format, "It gave me a great insight to how easy it would be to put a station together online with no central point or need for constant maintenance or weekly meetings. With that, the idea of *Radioactive International* was born" (Dónal Greene, 17.08.2015).

The launch of *Radioactive International* was based on the continued collective aims of DIY punk producers, facilitated through combined factors of technical development and experimentation together with the continued creativity and enthusiasm of the people involved. Production Co-ordinator, Jo Greene, describes the first reunion of the original *Radioactive* station in 2012, "they were still the same people (just a bit greyer!) still with the same passion for music and ideas" (18.12.2015). The reunion included consultation on the idea of presenters making programs at home on laptops and uploading them to a central point on the internet. The idea was enthusiastically received with fifteen presenters joining within a week. The station was launched shortly after, in mid-September 2012. Forty shows went to air over the first two weeks, quickly building to thirty a week soon after, with programmes uploaded from across the globe by 2016. The collaborative, co-operative approach which framed the initial pirate station, continues to drive the development of the online service, described as, "a collective of like-minded people who are passionate about their music, art and politics, sometimes we like to mash it all up and sometimes keep it separate" (radioactiveinternational.org).

5. DIY radio producers

These collective values are a continual theme throughout the accounts of individual DIY punk radio producers, irrespective of station or programme. As well as making radio, participants listen to and share each other's shows, stressing the importance of discovering music and connecting with like-minded people through real networks. As long-standing fanzine producer and co-presenter of the *Under the Pavement* radio show, Richard Cubesville states, "punks get radio" (18.12.2015). People who like obscure or marginalised music appreciate coverage through mainstream or conventional media, "my interest in DIY punk was greatly fuelled by its total lack of coverage on TV, radio and in the press (…) there is a questing spirit to go out and find music" (18.12.2015). Each of the accounts reflects this view, directly linking radio with finding and sharing new music. This is combined with an enduring connection to the medium of radio, which is discussed as central to their initial introduction to music and discovery of punk. Most responses explicitly trace this back to the role of BBC Radio DJ John Peel in the development of punk. Whilst he represented the establishment BBC, his show gave a platform to punk and alternative artists that acted as a

gateway, "John Peel has a lot to answer for — he made radio a vehicle for introducing a large audience to obscure and DIY music. Part of what we do is in that tradition — hardly anything we play comes from major labels and much of what we do is rooted in the local DIY scene" (Richard, 18.12.2015).

In each case, radio programmes are described as an extension of wider DIY punk participation and production including bands, distros, promotions, and particularly fanzines. Richard has produced long-standing DIY fanzine *One Way Ticket to Cubesville* since the 1980s and both radio co-hosts have written fanzines over the years, demonstrating an enthusiasm and innovation which "complements radio very well" (18.12.2015). The connection between fanzines and online radio is further illustrated through *The Hope Show* which provides an ideal example of the digital evolution of multiplatform DIY practice. The programme was an early addition to *Radioactive International*, produced by Dublin's *Hope Collective*. Starting from the initial aim of bringing bands to play in Ireland in the late 1980s, the *Hope Collective* grew throughout the 1990s with a collaborative approach to putting on gigs, "the idea of the gigs was that we were people not promoters, and the bands and audience were equal. At our gigs there were no supports, just people helping out" (hopecollectiveireland.com).

Document: a Story of Hope (2002) outlines the history of the collective with contributions from, amongst others, Dick Lucas (Subhumans & Citizen Fish), Boz (Steam Pig & Yurt) and Andy Moor (The Ex & Dog Faced Hermans). Stories for almost every gig from the early days, are combined with vegan recipes, reflecting the role of music as inextricably linked to DIY politics and lifestyle, "Hope's ethos was to provide good music for the greatest number of people at the lowest price possible and to always remain outside of the corporate structures. It pioneered an independent, self-supportive ethos at a time when the ambition of most Irish musicians was to sign to a major-label for the maximum amount of money available" (Hope Collective, 2002). The gigs continue, and *The Hope Show* on *Radioactive International* supports the *Hope* fanzine and a blog, *Musings on Music, Books and Life* which cites punk as a central reference point in a collection of posts on politics, music, football, books, blogs and movies, "it has made a lasting impression on us and has helped shape our lives. We want to share some experiences and document a cultural movement" (Hope Collective, 2016).

The Hope Show presents online radio as one format within a wider collection of multi-platform content to share music, politics and events, demonstrating the ways in which DIY communities are utilising digital production and internet technologies. David Hemphill and Shari Leskowitz (2012) identify a growing range of radical knowledge-sharing within DIY communities of practice, including skillshares, open-source media, fanzines, and pirate and internet radio shows. The study demonstrates the increasing need for alternative information-sharing to counteract the concentration of commercial media power. However, where the *Radioactive* story demonstrates an historical process of creative independence and political activism, Hemphill and Leskowitz participants suggest that such developments are "new", "there are lots of people who are waking up to the fact that if we need a real alternative media, it's something we are going to have to do for ourselves (…) they have real freedom to share with their community in a way that's not mediated at all by the Establishment" (2012, p.13).

The aims and practices that underpin DIY punk radio predate the internet and digital production technology. Instead, activity illustrates the resourceful, adaptive nature of DIY production, combining traditional and new technologies in a constant process to bypass commercial and corporate control. DIY communities display a blend of enthusiasm and scepticism about the internet (Hemphill & Leskowitz, 2012) which is demonstrated through the varying range of responses in relation to radio online. Producers acknowledge the ease and accessibility of the internet as providing a low-cost and immediate platform for radio, with the ability to post and listen for free, at any time, from anywhere in the world. Yet issues of access and corporate control remain, through surveillance, smart advertising and endless unedited material. As Richard Cubesville argues, "Power is Power — much of what people listen to is as mainstream and insipid as it always was"

(18.12.2015). The internet may have increased access to more content, yet major labels and mainstream media still dictate the majority of listening, "the desire to explore and to innovate didn't begin with the internet — I discovered a world's worth of punk music through leftfield radio shows, fanzines and tape trading" (Richard, 18.12.2015).

DIY punk radio producers agree on the benefits of online radio distribution, but responses equally value the immediate connection of live, traditionally broadcast radio (Tommy Easy Snappin', 4.8.2015; John Spithead/Liquidizer, 16.11.2015; Richard Cubesville, 18.12.2015). This is illustrated through the example of the programme I co-produce on community radio. *The Liquidizer* format is heavily based on listener contributions through social media, and the ability to interact and connect with real networks of like-minded people is a key feature. For co-presenter, John Spithead, producing live radio is comparable with the experience of playing gigs in the 1990s, but without the exhausting touring, tedious rehearsals and late nights (16.11.2015). Now older, and with the need to balance work and family lives, radio provides an accessible and low maintenance means of creative production and participation.

In addition, the content and style of DIY punk radio celebrates the lo-fi aesthetic of analogue pirate radio, as reflected in the names of *Radioactive International* shows, including *Tunes from the Kitchen*; *Crap on the Radio* and *Suburban Superheroes — Soiled by Cheap Spanish Wine.* Rather than indicating low quality, it demonstrates an active rejection of "professionalism" and the slick production values of commercial broadcasting. For producers, the freedom from specific format, playlist or genre is central, valuing the "chaotic", "rough" qualities of programmes, "Guests have a lot of time within the show to express themselves — musicians have more or less free rein to play for however long they want, whereas interviews are slow and often go off on tangents. All in all it lives up to our strapline, 'Anarchy on the Airwaves'" (Richard, 18.12.2016).

Making radio is viewed equally as creative production and social activity, with online content discussed in terms of connecting with existing and new contacts. Examples include Richard Cubesville's account of discovering Spanish band, *Accidente*, playing their music and interviewing them on the radio show and flying out to Barcelona to see them play live. In addition, contact through *The Liquidizer* programme in Australia led to Irish and UK punks originally involved in the 1990s meeting up at 2013 *Adelaide Punx Picnic* and establishing new networks across the globe (John Spithead, 16.11.2015). Radio is discussed in collective, participatory terms relating to extending a global network of collaborators. Kevin Dunn identifies this as a central feature of DIY punk record labels in a way that is equally relevant to radio, "through their activities, they continue to inspire others to produce while providing a powerful apparatus: the informal yet vibrant global DIY punk network outside the direct control of the corporate music industry" (2012, p. 234). Such networks have always been a central feature of DIY communities, creating alternative means of sharing music and ideas whether through fanzines, distros or tape-sharing. Online radio is an extension of this practice, utilising new technologies to encourage open access and participation.

6. Conclusion

This paper presents a growing movement of DIY radio online among a particular generation of producers, originally involved in 1980s and 1990s anarcho-punk. It considers punk radio as alternative media, an approach which emphasises the principles of organisation, production and social relations through which they are created (Atton, 2002: 9). The range of radio practice discussed shows that amateur and non-professional media producers "establish their own alternative frames of participation, political power and creativity" (Atton, 2015: 1). For those involved, the DIY punk values that underpin the activity are more significant than the technological developments that have facilitated online radio production and distribution. The digital revolution is most often credited as democratising media participation leading to a proliferation of user-generated content and amateur production. Yet as alternative media theory and punk radio practice shows, the history of radio is characterised by DIY activism to bypass governmental and

capitalist control. An historical analysis of the *Radioactive* journey from pirate to online radio illustrates the ongoing process of innovation and countercultural potential of DIY punk radio, continually developing and adapting technologies to circumvent the governmental restrictions of analogue radio.

For all participants, the relationship between radio and punk is clear, recognising it as an affordable, accessible and immediate means of giving people a voice (Thomas, 19.01.2016). As a generation growing up in the 1960s and 1970s, they describe an instinctive connection with the medium of radio that relates back to their initial discovery of punk and alternative music. Now in their forties and fifties, online radio provides a flexible and low-maintenance platform that can be easily balanced with multiple work, family and social commitments. Each individual DIY radio producer links their current activity to the impact of original anarcho-punk involvement and its continued influence in an ongoing process of creative, political and social participation. "Although today's capitalist system can easily appropriate and assimilate messages and symbols, it is far more difficult to appropriate the ethos that is at the heart of DIY punk culture" (Dunn, 2012, p. 234). The evolution of online punk radio demonstrates the enduring relevance of this ethos to a generation of independent producers. DIY is considered as a lifetime practice, with radio presented as an extension of wider cultural production driven by the principles of freedom, collaboration and anti-capitalist activism. This snapshot of contemporary radio practice illustrates the continued resourcefulness, creativity and innovation of DIY networks to maintain independent control of production and distribution, irrespective of age.

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