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UCC
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

Broadcasting the library – *Shush! Sounds from University College Cork Library*

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Introduction: Let the music begin

In 2016 University College Cork Library began a new project in the ongoing quest to promote the Library and its services through engagement with the user community. This initiative was a radio show. This show, called *Shush! Sounds from UCC Library* has now become a key component in the promotion, marketing and public engagement of UCC Library.

The idea for *Shush!* was initially sparked by a tweet one evening from an account called @lockedinlibrary, a radio show hosted by two Brunel University librarians. After a number of months of discussions, briefings and planning UCC Library had its very own radio show. *Shush!* went live on air on campus radio station UCC 98.3FM for the first time at 11am, Monday morning the 26th May 2016.

What is Shush! Sounds from UCC Library?

Shush! Sounds from UCC Library is a weekly radio show, hosted by two UCC Librarians: Ronan Madden and Martin O'Connor. As well as featuring a rather eclectic selection of (in the main) left field rock music, the show features UCC Library news, interviews with UCC Library staff and visiting librarians, in addition to regular features on UCC Library resources and issues relevant to librarianship in general.

UCC 98.3FM, UCC's dedicated 24 hour radio station broadcasts across UCC into every coffee shop, bar, bank, restaurant, hair and beauty salon on campus. It also broadcasts on FM radio to the full Cork region (a potential audience of some 400,000 listeners) and is broadcast live across the internet, to the world.

This live broadcast of the show is only the start of the *Shush!* story. From this live broadcasted show a podcast is created and shared across various social media platforms thereby keeping the public engagement and promotion going throughout the week and beyond.

Why UCC Library does the show

The Library does the show for a number of reasons. In addition to being a broadcasting tool for the Library, it performs outreach, marketing, and engagement functions. Students and staff are bombarded daily with an overload of information and data via a multitude of platforms. The show is our attempt to bypass this noise and get the Library message noticed and, more importantly, engaged with.

Social media platforms

Although the show itself broadcasts for just one hour a week, *Shush!* does have a life above and beyond this one hour via a number of social media platforms.

- The weekly set lists are created using Spotify. The studio itself is equipped with vinyl decks and CD players, but in terms of ease of use Spotify on the PC makes it easier to plan the show, and is easier to work with. These setlists are shared after the show.
- The show has a dedicated Soundcloud account where the show can be listened back to as a podcast. The account also hosts podcasts of all *Shush!* library interviews and weekly music quiz.
- Twitter is by far the show's primary engagement and dissemination tool. As well as broadcasting library news we live tweet each show, using the hashtag #nowplaying. This brings on air engagement with listeners as they interact with us about the music during and after the show. To facilitate on air engagement Hootsuite is used to schedule the tweets in advance. This serves to free up time to engage with responses whilst live on air.
- *Shush!* does have a Facebook account, but the level of engagement on Facebook may not quite justify a presence on the platform. This is something that will need to be reviewed in time.
- *Shush!* has a Wordpress Blog. This is somewhere to gather together all the material from each show – the podcast of the show, podcasts of interviews and the music quiz, the library news and features, recommended reads of the week, and tracks of the week from Martin and Ronan.
- *Shush!* has a YouTube Channel, used mainly as a broadcast medium – simply to compile a playlist of the week's tunes to be shared via our live tweets.
- At the time of writing a *Shush!* Libguide is in train.

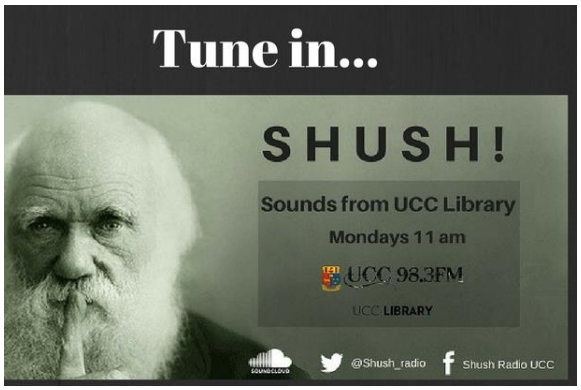
Broadcasting the Library:

Three main approaches to promoting UCC Library have been used on the show: interviews, library 'spotlight' features, and library news. From the outset the intention has been to include as many aspects of our services and collections as possible. This has encompassed the more 'standard' news items like opening hours and new services, but we've also aimed to shine a light on

those things that make us unique and distinct as a library. To achieve this it's been crucial to enlist the support of Library colleagues, for example through recording and broadcasting interviews with them, each focusing on a particular theme, pertinent at a particular point in time.

Examples of the interviews recorded and broadcast include:

- Special Collections at UCC Library, and how it supports the work of academics & students
- The acquisition of new collections such as the John Minihan photographic archive, an important new research collection for the Library
- CORA: Our institutional repository
- Open access, an interview recorded for Open Access Week
- A welcome message for new students from our Library Director
- UCC Library's Green Energy Campaign
- A chat with the Library's archivists on the subject of a Library exhibition they curated



Reaching out beyond the Library in the traditional sense, we've recorded interviews with managers of other services housed within the main Library building. Examples have been interviews with the Online Learning Project Manager at UCC, the manager of the new Skills Centre, the Head of the Disability Support Service, and an interview recorded with the staff of 'Blackstone Launchpad', an entrepreneurial mentoring service.

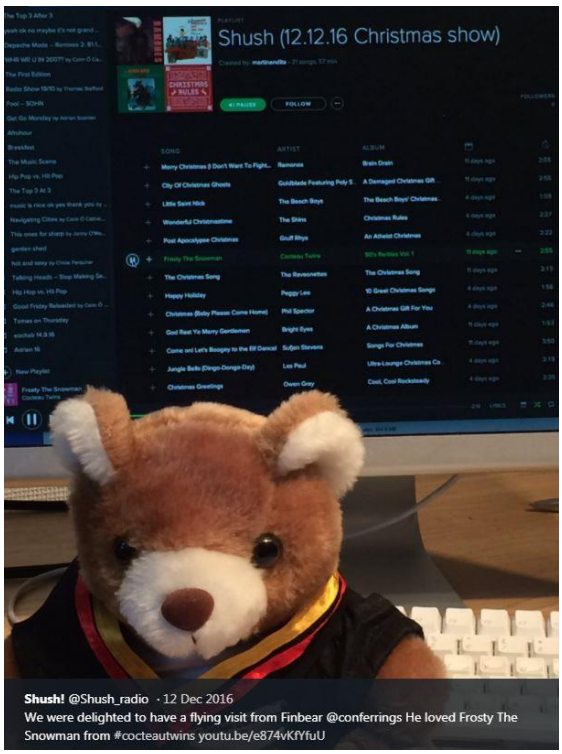
Other interesting interviews included one with Mancunian poet Mike Garry during his visit to Cork, an interview with #uklibchat, and an interview with acclaimed American photographer Judith Aronson, discussing an exhibition of her work which was hosted by the Library. We also interviewed two academics who had just won a university prize for excellence in teaching, focusing on how they use the Library to support their work.

Our 'Library Spotlight' feature gives us freedom to focus on, and to examine in more detail, aspects of our services or collections. So far we have highlighted specific collections such as bibliotherapy, newspapers, theses, exam papers online, and the Irish Research Electronic Library (IReL). We've also thrown a spotlight on specific research databases plus resources and guides for particular subject areas and services.

'Library News' is a weekly feature on the show where we cover everything and anything that might be happening in the Library. Again, the aim to be as inclusive as possible, and encourage colleagues to suggest news items to us. We endeavour to synchronise the news items with those listed on the Library website and through the Library's social media presence on Twitter and Facebook. Typical news items

have been: opening hours, new LibGuides, training sessions and orientation, exhibitions and events, new collections and resources, new equipment and service improvements.

An additional feature is 'Library Request', which involves playing a song request from one of our colleagues and briefly mentioning their role in the Library. Staff from all grades and all areas of the Library have engaged, which has made for an eclectic mix of songs! We've recently introduced a music quiz to the show and found our listenership expanding as a result. Sponsorship for the prizes has been supplied by University College Cork Visitors Centre. UCC Library also sponsors a prize each week.



Some Reflections:

Becoming DJs: Neither of us had any prior experience in such a role when we started. Kieran Hurley, the station manager provided brief training but his belief in learning by doing meant that we were live on the airwaves almost before we knew it. Mistakes were made at the outset, particularly with the equipment in the studio, and our presenting style was rough and ready. Arguably little has changed since, but we don't pretend to be (or need to be) professionals, and we've convinced ourselves that this is simply part of the character and charm of the show!

Sharing presenting duties: This has made it easier for us. It's more relaxed, allows for banter, and four eyes are better than two if something goes awry in the studio. We quickly and naturally developed a methodology of sorts in terms of selecting tracks for each show and taking turns looking after the controls in the studio. On a number of occasions we have had to present solo shows, and this is more challenging as naturally one person has to consider everything: operating the studio, talking to the listeners, engaging through social media etc.

Workload: The work each week consists of selecting playlists, compiling Library news and features, and managing the social media. Some weeks we arrange and record interviews for broadcast on the show. There is work, without a doubt, but it tends not to feel onerous, and the bulk of it is done outside official work hours. Being involved in *Shush!* also prompts us to keep discovering new music; and rediscovering old, something we both enjoy.

Editorial control: While we have full editorial control of the show, we are conscious that we are representing the Library and the Library brand. At times

there has been a degree of self-censorship in terms of song choices (lyrics and themes), but we have relied on common sense.

Podcasts and social media: This has been essential. The live show serves as a nucleus of sorts, around which all of the social media 'electrons' can exist, disseminating information about the Library to audiences we may not have reached previously. *Shush!* is more than just a 'radio show' in that sense, it's a platform upon which we can help articulate the 'Library voice' in harmony with the other Library communications channels.

Impact of the show: An important consideration is whether or not it is possible to measure the impact the show is having. Unfortunately accurate listenership figures (at least on the 'airwaves') remain intangible but we can look at the number of listens to the podcasts. At the time of writing we have reached almost 3,000 total plays, with some of the interviews in particular achieving high numbers. Our Twitter metrics and level of engagement has been very encouraging. The show has been an inspiration for others, for example the UCC Skills Centre followed our lead and have created their own radio show, *'Write Here, Right Now'*. Goldsmiths Library at University of London have started broadcasting their own show, *'Sounds of the Stax'*, inspired by the *Shush!* presentation at the 2017 Internet Librarian International Conference. From emails we have received from other libraries we think there could be more such shows on the way.





Conclusion:
Shush! has been very much a venture into uncharted waters, but we've learned that if we try not to be perfectionists, enjoy it, and remain open minded then the possibilities open up, and one idea leads to another. A positive reaction from our Library colleagues has been critical in generating content for the show. We've also had tremendous support from Librarians beyond our own Library. The show continues to evolve and new ideas are still emerging as we proceed.

To conclude, *Shush! Sounds from UCC Library* has been a most successful programme for UCC Library, raising the profile of the Library and leading to relationships with other departments in UCC and beyond. It has provided us with a forum to promote and broadcast the Library in an innovative and novel way. We really look forward to seeing where it goes from here.

Twitter @shush_radio

Blog *Shush! Sounds from UCC Library (the blog of the show)*

Podcast https://soundcloud.com/shush-radio-486769527

Facebook https://www.facebook.com/ShushRadioUCC/