

# DJ Me

Free online programs help you create your own radio station in your dorm room.

By Mac Randall and Aaron Bell

Most music fans know all too well that commercial radio stations are atrocious. Listen to a station for a couple of days and it's possible to predict the next time you'll hear the latest by Matchbox Twenty or Third Eye Blind almost to the minute. The only thing apparently left to chance is which old AC/DC song they're going to play.

It's no surprise, then, that listeners tired of being force-fed the same old slop are turning away from commercial radio in droves and getting their music via the Internet. There are now thousands of online radio stations transmitting from all over the world; click on any search engine and you'll find everything from the largest corporate outfits to dorm-room DJs dropping beats. One good place for Internet radio is Real Audio's site at [real.com](http://real.com) (handy too, since they have Real Player downloads that you'll need in order to listen). But if you think you can do better than what you're hearing—and who knows, you probably can—it's nearly as easy to get your own online station up and running.

Before you start down the digital DJ path, though, you should decide whether you're doing this solely for your own amusement or whether your goal is to edify the general public through your exquisite taste in tunes. In either case, you've got plenty of options. "Music manager" sites like [MP3.com](http://MP3.com) make it a snap to devise your own radio-style playlists—you can use music taken off the site itself, transfer tracks off other web sites, or digitize your own CDs. Some of these sites are designed so that the files can only be heard by you and can't be broadcast to the rest of the world. (Napster allows you to trade audio files with others but doesn't have the ability to create playlists.)

Closer to radio as we know it are sites like [Live365](http://Live365), meant for would-be DJs who want to start broadcasting their own music and for people who want to hear streaming music mixed by fellow users. The way Live365 works is typical of most online DJ sites. It offers two different services, LiveCast and EasyCast, both of which require a quick registration and a "Powered by Live365" banner next to their station link. Our own station, at [steamtunnels.net](http://steamtunnels.net), is powered by Live365.

With LiveCast, DJs who are already broadcasting from their own computer can send their music stream to the Live365 server, which then rebroadcasts the music over the Internet. This helps deal with potential signal problems and dramatically increases the number of simultaneous lis-



teners to your station. EasyCast, meanwhile, is for people who don't have the ability to be online 24 hours a day; after you sign up for EasyCast, Live365 gives you 100MB of space for the storage of MP3s and then broadcasts your music from its servers.

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Most online radio sites feature a list of broadcasters, grouped by genre, which can be listened to with an MP3 player. Some also compile Top-10 station lists, along with the relevant stations' listenerships, ratings and genres. This is a good way of checking out what other DJs are doing, and the better you know what the competition's up to, the easier it'll be for you to blow 'em all away with your own station.

Now go make some noise. •

Go to [steamtunnels.net](http://steamtunnels.net) and listen to our own radio station, broadcasting trance and techno 24 hours a day.

## Links

### [live365.com](http://live365.com)

One of the top radio hubs on the Internet, this site makes online broadcasting a cinch.

### [shoutcast.com](http://shoutcast.com)

Similar to Live365, this service is designed to work with the Winamp MP3 player.

### [launch.com](http://launch.com)

Create your own playlist that any user can tune into. LAUNCHcast also plays songs that it thinks you might like based on your previous ratings.

### [spinner.com](http://spinner.com)

Over 100 stations grouped by genre.

### [mp3.com](http://mp3.com)

Allows you to put together playlists like a program director, but those playlists can only be heard by you.

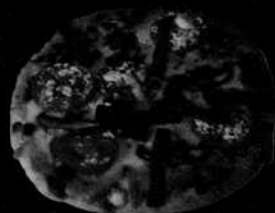
### [myplay.com](http://myplay.com)

Similar to MP3.com, but you can share your playlists with other users.

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