



The RUSC Guide to

# Old Time Radio

and using RUSC.COM



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# Introduction

Welcome to the RUSC Guide to Old Time Radio and Using RUSC.COM.

The purpose of this little e-book is two-fold. Firstly, it acts as a brief introduction to the wonderful world of old time radio and secondly, it provides instructions on how to use RUSC.COM.

If you're a computer expert and have been enjoying old radio shows for many years then you'll probably find little to interest you, but if you are new to old radio shows or are not familiar with downloading and playing MP3 files then hopefully you'll find it very informative and useful.

I've tried to lay the book out in an easy to follow format with clear chapter headings and a table of contents page at the front, which should help you to find what you're looking for quickly and easily. I haven't included an index as I didn't feel that was necessary, but should you think otherwise do let me know.

Throughout the book I've used a font that I hope is clear and large enough to be read by the vast majority of readers without you having to resort to digging out your magnifying glass.

Don't forget that you don't have to resort to reading the whole document on screen. If you are anything like me you might want to print it out and sit down in your favorite chair with a nice cup of coffee.

This is the first edition so if you have any comments, good or bad, please do let me know.

I'm also keen to add any information I may have missed. so if you have any suggestions do drop me a line. My e-mail address is [ned@rusc.com](mailto:ned@rusc.com).

Happy reading and happy listening

Ned Norris

# Chapter 1 – Old Time Radio

Once upon a time there was old time radio ...

Long, long ago, before Detective Andy Sipowicz was patrolling the streets of New York in NYPD, before Jerry Seinfeld was making people laugh, before Tom Cruise (or whoever the latest screen idol is) was wooing audiences on the silver screen and before "shock-jocks" were polluting the airwaves there was a form of entertainment that transported people off to strange new worlds on a daily basis.



This magical medium:

... could not be seen and yet could create the most wonderful images in your mind.

... could make you laugh or cry.

... brought all Americans together to share the trials and tribulations of some of the greatest characters ever created.

... reached far and wide in times of national celebration and disaster.

It's hard to believe now just how popular and powerful a medium radio was back in the 1930s, 40s and 50s, but in its day it was, in many ways, far bigger than anything we have today.

Radio was to the 1930s what the Internet was to the 1990s. It was fresh, exciting, and opened up brand new possibilities. People jumped onto the radio bandwagon and entrepreneurs launched businesses. Indeed, it wouldn't be exaggerating to say that radio ushered in a whole new world –

a world where a single medium could reach millions of people at exactly the same time.

## **When was the first radio show broadcast?**

The dawn of radio was over eighty years ago. Woodrow Wilson was sitting in the Whitehouse, cars were still a novelty and wireless trans-Atlantic telegraphy was state-of-the-art technology.

Prior to radio broadcasting as we know it today there were many amateur radio enthusiasts. Today they are restricted to two-way communications between people who hold valid "Ham" radio licences, but around the time of World War I things were a little less formal. It was from this group of pioneers that the first broadcast came.

The term *broadcast* was coined by a ham-radio enthusiast called Dr. Frank Conrad who lived in Pittsburgh and worked for Westinghouse as assistant chief engineer.

On 17th October 1919, bored of all the technical chit-chat that went on across the amateur radio airwaves, Frank Conrad decided to put a microphone in front of the speaker from his phonograph and play records across the airwaves. Mail poured in from far and wide, some even requesting other records to play. Frank was overwhelmed with the response and announced that he would broadcast his records for two hours each Wednesday and Saturday evening.

It wasn't long before Frank ran out of records to play. He was grateful when the owner of a local record store offered to lend him more records to play on the condition that Dr. Conrad would announce to the listeners that all the records played could be purchased at the store.

These broadcasts became very popular in the Pittsburgh area. So popular that Westinghouse believed there might be a valid business to be made from the manufacture of radio receivers.

To stimulate demand Westinghouse needed content that people would want to listen to. It was decided that the 1920 presidential campaign results would be just the thing to whet people's appetites.

A transmitting station was build on top of one of Westinghouse buildings in East Pittsburgh. Time was of the essence as the elections were just a month away. On October 27th, 1920 a licence was issued and KDKA was born. At 6pm on 2nd November KDKA began broadcasting the results and continued until noon the following day.

Unfortunately Dr. Conrad wasn't present for this momentous broadcast. He was busy standing by five miles away ready to continue the broadcast on his old equipment if anything should go wrong with the new transmitter.

The following year saw many more firsts.

**4th March 1921** - First inaugural address (Warren G. Harding)

**June 1921** - First *inexpensive* home receiver sold for \$25 (Aeriola Jr. with a range of 12 to 15 miles)

**2nd July 1921** - First broadcast of World Heavyweight Title Fight (Dempsey vs. Carpentier)

**5th August 1921** - First baseball play-by-play broadcast (Pittsburgh vs. Philadelphia)

Things moved at a rapid rate after these initial pioneering developments. By the end of 1922 somewhere in the region of 400 broadcast stations had been licensed and radio was about to enter its *Golden Age*.

Westinghouse decided that there was no money to be made in broadcasting itself, but there would be huge demand for suitable radio equipment on which people could listen to the broadcasts. There Aerila Jr. was quickly followed by the Aerila Sr. which was priced at \$60 and was the first commercially available radio receiver to use vacuum tube technology.

## AT&T lead the way

In early 1922 AT&T, who controlled all the telephone lines, announced a brand new concept in broadcasting called the *Toll Station*. This new system would allow anyone to broadcast who was willing to pay the fee. Their plan was to create a network of radio stations that would allow people who used the toll station to reach people far and wide.

In August 1922 the first of these “toll” stations went live. The station was WEAF in New York and the first network broadcast happened on the 4<sup>th</sup> January 1923 when WEAF teamed up with WNAC in Boston. Before the end of 1924, AT&T had put together a transcontinental network consisting of twenty-three stations to broadcast the Calvin Coolidge presidential address from.



Although AT&T was leading the way in this exciting new industry they were not alone. RCA bought the New York station WJZ in 1923 and set up WRC in Washington. AT&T's monopoly over the telephone network

meant that RCA had to find a different means of broadcasting to its own network of stations. The solution they came up with was to use Western Union's telegraph lines, which was far inferior to AT&T's phone lines, but better than nothing.

In July of 1926 there was a major shift in this fledgling market place when RCA put together a consortium to acquire the broadcasting interests of AT&T. RCA's partners were Westinghouse and General Electric. The terms of the agreements meant that AT&T could not compete for seven years and that they had to make their telephone lines available to RCA. In return RCA agreed to use AT&T's telephone network exclusively whenever possible.

#### Why do some sources refer to the Red and Blue networks

Before RCA and its partners acquired the broadcasting interests of AT&T it had already established WJZ in New York so two networks were set-up; the Red network and the Blue network. The Red network had WEAF as its hub and lead the way with the commercial money-earning programs. The Blue network had WJZ as its lead station. It focused, although not exclusively, on public service broadcasting and new untested programs. The Blue network would eventually be renamed ABC. If you are wondering why they were called Blue and Red let me put you out of your misery. It was simply because those were the colored marker pens used to trace the routes of the two networks back at NBC head office.

## NBC – The Granddaddy

Shortly after acquiring AT&T's broadcasting interests RCA set up a new company that was to play a key role in radio over the coming decades. The company's name was the National Broadcasting Company or NBC as it was better known.

At the time of incorporation the NBC network comprised of nineteen stations. By 1928 that number had grown to 56, by 1938 there were 154 and by 1940 there were 214 stations making up the NBC network. This was truly a transcontinental operation.

## CBS – The New Kid on the Block

Shortly after NBC became operational a new company called United Independent Broadcasters was incorporated. The aim was to make radio commercially viable by selling air time and acquiring sponsors for

programs. Columbia Phonograph Co. became involved by setting up a new division called the Columbia Phonograph Broadcasting system which was to act as the sales operation for the network.

Broadcasting at what became known as the United Network commenced in September of 1927, but the company struggled to get sufficient sales volume. It wasn't long before all the existing investors backed-out. Luckily a new investor was waiting in the wings. William S. Paley took control of the network in September of the following year and it was renamed CBS (Columbia Broadcasting System).

CBS started with just sixteen stations. By the end of the 1930s it had over one hundred of which WABC in New York became the flagship.

## **MBS – A different way of doing things**

The next major network to join the fray was the Mutual Broadcasting System (MBS) in 1934. This network was owned by WGN (a subsidiary of The Chicago Tribune) and the Bamberger Broadcasting Service (a subsidiary of Macy's Department Store in New York).

Unlike NBC and CBS the Mutual Network did not own any stations. It acted as a go-between for several other stations who cooperated in producing shows and then selling them to other member stations within the Mutual Network.

The founding member-stations of MBS were WGN Chicago, WLW Cincinnati, WXYZ Detroit and WOR Newark. WXYZ left in 1935 and was replaced by CKLW Ontario. Between 1936 and 1939 MBS expanded rapidly: 13 stations from the Colonial Network operating in New England, 10 stations from the California based Don Lee Network and 23 stations

from Texas. By 1940 the network consisted of 160 stations some of who also had arrangements with NBC and CBS.

## **The Microsoft Effect**

In 1943 an event was to happen that very much resembled the Supreme Court case that would involve Microsoft towards the end of the century.

The general consensus in the industry was that NBC with its Blue and Red networks was far too powerful and was stifling competition. The Supreme Court ruled that NBC must divest itself of the Blue network.

To meet the requirements of the Supreme Court ruling NBC sold the Blue network to Edward Noble, the president of the Lifesaver Candy Company. In 1945 the name of the network was changed to ABC (American Broadcasting Company)

## **Boom & Bust**

Throughout the 30s and 40s radio audiences grew at a phenomenal rate. Its development was very similar to the way TV was to blossom several decades later. Some radio series came and went in the blink of an eye whereas others would stick around season after season. A prime example of staying power was The Amos and Andy Show which ran, in various formats, for over 30 years from 1929 through to 1960.

Radio was a launch pad for many careers both in front of the microphone and behind it. Some such as Jack Benny, Bob Hope, Bing Crosby and

Orson Welles made a smooth transition from radio to TV and films whereas others were just not compatible with the visual mediums.

By 1962 radio was in its final death throes. Yours Truly Johnny Dollar was the last of mainstream dramatic show to air. Its final broadcast was on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1962 and Johnny could have charged the last nail in radio's coffin to that final expense account.

In the years leading up to the early 1960s listeners had migrated en-mass from radio to the new fangled medium of television. People no longer wanted to just use their ears they wanted to be entertained in an audio-visual fashion.

In some areas radio has seen quite a revival over the past decade due to long car journeys and disillusionment with much of the content now appearing on our TV screens, but there was a time in the 1960s and 70s when people genuinely believed that radio really was in the process of a long painful death. Luckily, it looks like radio will live on for many more decades, but it is unlikely that it will ever reach the dizzying heights of its golden years or regain its penchant for innovation, excitement and entertainment.

## **Where did all the shows go?**

What happened to all those old radio shows and why would anyone want to listen to them today?

It's over 70 years since Freeman Gosden and Charles Correll first hit the airwaves with Amos n' Andy and 40 years since Johnny Dollar filed his final expense claim. For some people these names will bring back many

memories, but few readers under fifty will recall clearly the wonderful days of the golden age of radio.



Why, all these decades later, when we have hundreds of terrestrial, cable and satellite channels to choose from would people want to listen to these old radio broadcasts? What on earth could be so special about these old radio shows?

There are 1001 answers to that question because every listener is different. For some it is the well thought out plots of the police procedural stories, for others it is concise thirty-minute storylines, others might prefer the wholesome nature of the shows devoid of profanities and vulgarity, and many listeners to old radio shows simply enjoy the escapism often referring to them as "movies for the mind" or "movies without pictures".

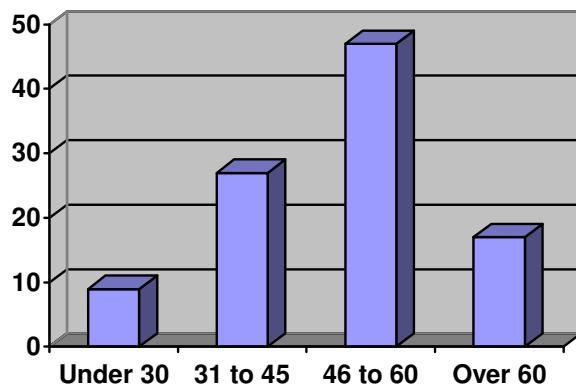
Fortunately, over the years many people have collected and restored these old shows so that they can be enjoyed again as much by older listeners as a new generation coming to them for the first time. Whether you fall into the former or latter group or somewhere in between does not matter ... these fabulous shows are, and always have been, something that people of all ages can enjoy.

Whether you're eight or eighty, American or from elsewhere around the globe, male or female, there are old radio shows available to enjoy a second time around or discover anew. If you've never heard an old radio show or it's a long time since you had the pleasure you are in very special surprise.



## Are old radio show fans old?

Fans of old radio shows come from all walks of life and from all age groups. Below is a graph depicting the breakdown of members of RUSC.



It's wonderful that people in their teens, whose parents may not have even been alive when these shows were first aired, can find old radio shows entertaining all these decades later.

## Chapter 2 - Old radio show genres

The RUSC Old Time Radio website is split into ten major categories; comedy, detective, drama, juvenile, miscellaneous, quiz show, science fiction, thriller, variety and westerns.

There are many other minor categories or sub-categories that could have been included, but the aim was to keep things simple. For example *Sport* could have been a category of its own, but I've put it into *Miscellaneous*, what could be termed audience participation shows have been thrown in with *Quiz Shows*, and horror is included under *Thrillers*.

Recently, I put a survey on the site and members kindly entered details as to what their favourite categories are. Here are the results.

■ 1.) Comedy	16%
■ 2.) Detective	20%
■ 3.) Drama	10%
■ 4.) Juvenile	3%
■ 5.) Miscellaneous	4%
■ 6.) Quiz Shows	2%
■ 7.) Science Fiction	12%
■ 8.) Thriller	18%
■ 9.) Variety & Music	3%
■ 10.) Western	11%

It looks like detective shows and thrillers are the most popular closely followed by comedy. It's interesting to see that westerns are slightly more popular than drama and I suppose it is no surprise that juvenile shows are quite a way behind; I suppose not too many school kids are dashing home to listen to their favorite old time radio serial these days.

On the following pages is a brief overview of each category or genre.



## Comedy

From the early 1930s onwards comedy was arguably the most popular category of radio programming on the air.

*Amos and Andy* got the ball rolling in 1929. This was quickly followed by *Lum and Abner*, which could easily be thought of as a hillbilly version of *Amos and Andy*.

At the same time as situation comedies were gaining a foothold a plethora of stars were moving from vaudeville to the exciting new medium of radio. Many of these shows topped the popularity polls for years to come including series starring Jack Benny, Eddie Cantor, Fred Allen, the ever-popular Bob Hope, and George Burns.

Most of the hit comedy programs were targeted at adults, but there were quite a few that broadened the appeal to include younger members of the family. These included *The Life of Riley* and *The Aldrich Family*. This latter series was a huge success and the catch phrase “Henry – Henry Aldritch” will be familiar to anyone who grew up in the 1940s or early 1950s.

**NED'S PICKS:** If I ever need cheering up the programs I usually turn to (in no particular order) are:

- Life of Riley
- Aldrich Family
- Life of Luigi
- Fibber McGee & Molly
- The Bickersons
- Father Knows Best







## Detective

This is a catch-all category for anything to do with crime or detection. You'll find everything from investigative journalists (did they call them that back then) such as Randy Stone in *Nightbeat* through to police procedurals like *Dragnet*.

At a time when music, variety and comedy ruled the airwaves a soon to be famous Orson Welles was one of the first to get the ball rolling when he played the lead in a new series called *The Shadow*. This ground-breaking program had previously appeared in print as did many of the other leading programs in this genre. Just a couple of classic examples are *The Adventures of Philip Marlow* which were based on the novels of Raymond Chandler and *The Adventures of Sam Spade* which were based on work of Dashiell Hammett.

The detective or crime genre became increasingly popular as the years rolled by. In the 1949/50 season thirty different programs from this genre were being broadcast in prime time.

**NED'S PICKS:** It's difficult to pick just a few of my favorites from this category as there are just so many to choose from, but here are half a dozen that I find particularly enjoyable.



- Dragnet
- Mr District Attorney
- This is Your FBI
- Yours Truly Johnny Dollar
- Broadway is My Beat
- Nightbeat

## Westerns



There were cowboy shows for the kids as early as the 1930s, but westerns aimed at adults didn't really take off until the early 1950s.

In 1952 the hugely popular *Gunsmoke* was first aired. It ran for nearly ten years and transferred successfully to the small screen where it became the longest running TV western of all time.

Many shows moved from radio to TV, but there were a few that moved the other way. One example is *Have Gun, Will Travel* which made its television debut on September 14, 1957 and hit the radio airwaves on November 23, 1958.

**NED'S PICKS:** When I get the urge to put on my Stetson and ride off into the sunset I usually go for the classics:



- The Six Shooter
- Gunsmoke
- Have Gun Will Travel
- Tales of the Texas Rangers



## Drama

At first broadcasters didn't think serious drama would appeal to radio listeners, but when they realized there was demand for such content they excelled and put out a wide range of content some of which was quite mediocre, but many were tremendous.

The mid 1930s saw the debuts of some the greatest radio drama shows including *Cavalcade of America*, *Lux Radio* and *Mercury Theater on The Air*, which was later renamed *Campbell Playhouse*.

Without doubt the most famous radio drama of all time must be Orson Welles *War of the Worlds* that was broadcast at the time when Campbell Playhouse was known as Mercury Theater on the Air. It was first broadcast on 30<sup>th</sup> October 1937 and created quite a stir and opened up whole new possibilities for radio drama.

Another classic of the genre is the *CBS Radio Workshop* program *Report of the Weans*. If you've never heard this whimsical story from 1956 before then it comes highly recommended. It is a look at our world from six thousand years in the future. In the same way as our archaeologists dig up and interpret the lives of Egyptians living four thousand years ago these archaeologists of the future are digging up old books and records from our times and trying to make sense of them. The way they interpret such things as Elvis Presley singing Blue Suede Shoes really does make one wonder how accurate our opinion and knowledge of the Egyptians is. The story was originally written by novelist Robert Nathan and first appeared in Harper's Magazine. It was adapted for radio by William N. Robeson.

Many old time radio series could easily be put in this category, but have been placed elsewhere to make them easier to find. For example the

program *Suspense* is without doubt a classic drama series, but because of its content it has been filed under the *Thrillers* category. Shows such as *X Minus 1* and *Dimension X* are also excellent drama anthologies, but they seemed better suited to the *Science Fiction* section.

**NED'S PICKS:** If you want to lose yourself for thirty minutes, or an hour in the case of Lux radio, then the drama category has lots to choose from. Here are just a few of my favorite drama programs.



- Cavalcade of America
- CBS Radio Workshop
- First Nighter
- Lux Radio Theatre
- Mercury Theatre on Air
- Radio City Playhouse

## Juvenile



It is hard to imagine that there was a time when children would rush home from school to hear the latest episode of their favorite serial, but in the mid 1940s there were approximately thirty such programs broadcast regularly on the major networks almost every week.

In 1945 a child could choose from such memorable classics as *Buck Rogers in the 25<sup>th</sup> Century*, *Captain Midnight*, *Dick Tracy*, *The Green Hornet*, *Hop Harrigan*, *Jack Armstrong*, *The Lone Ranger*, *Superman*, *Tarzan*, *Terry and The Pirates* and *Tom Mix*.

Unfortunately we can't listen to what is generally believed to be the first children's program to be broadcast as, to my knowledge, there are no copies in circulation. The show was called *The Adventures of Helen and Mary* and it was first aired on the CBS network on September 27, 1929. In 1934 the name was changed to *In the Land of Let's Pretend* and this was eventually shortened in 1937 to the much more memorable *Let's Pretend*. Under its new title the series went on until 1954.

Many popular children's programs, such as *Superman*, were serials that continued from week-to-week often leaving the listener with a cliff-hanger ending to make sure they would return for the next episode. There were also many programs that had continuity of characters, but a story-line with a distinct beginning and end for each broadcast such as *The Lone Ranger*.

**NED'S PICKS:** Choosing favourite children's shows is quite a difficult task as an adult. It would very much depend on whether I was selecting programs for my own



listening pleasure or for a young person of today. If it were the latter then I think I'd have to say:

- Superman
- Jerry of the Circus (and also Jerry at Fairoaks)
- Chandu The Magician
- Lone Ranger
- Challenge of the Yukon
- The Green Hornet
- Cinnamon Bear (great for the younger ones at Christmas)



## Quiz Shows

Quiz shows became a popular format on radio during the 1930s. The first major hit was in 1936 with *Professor Quiz*. This new show hit CBS and ABC networks on May 9, 1936. Five contestants selected from the studio audience answered a series of questions and earned silver dollars as a reward. In some ways it was not dissimilar to present day TV quiz shows – there was even a best selling *Professor Quiz* board game tie in that hit the stores in 1939.

Another popular quiz show was Dr. IQ that also rewarded silver dollars for correct answers. If the contestant gave an incorrect answer they'd get candy, which was probably a lot more attractive to any children who might have been listening.

The amount of prize money offered varied hugely from the 68 cents per correct answer given to contestants on *Don't Forget* through to \$30,000 for the winner on *Hollywood Calling*. The massively popular Stop The Music gave away an average of \$20,000 in prizes just for knowing the name of the band playing when the phone call was made.

Also included in this category of shows are the audience participation programs which were often more of a vehicle for a comedian than a quiz. A typical example of this kind of show would be *You Bet Your Life* which was presented by Groucho Marx.

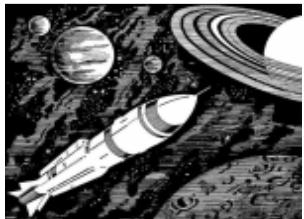
One show with a difference was Information Please. The show changed the format on its head. Rather than ask questions of contestants Information Please had a panel of experts which were asked questions by listeners. If the question was answered correctly there was no prize, but if

it was answered incorrectly the person who'd sent in the question would receive a small prize.

### NED'S PICKS:

- Information Please
- It Pays To Be Ignorant
- You Bet Your Life





## Science Fiction

It wasn't until 1950 that science fiction became the flavour of the month. CBS launched with *Beyond This World*, which was quickly renamed *Beyond Tomorrow*. Mutual went with *2000 Plus* and NBC with the outstanding *Dimension X*. In 1953 ABC began broadcasting *Tales of Tomorrow*, which had already had a successful run on television.

For two years from April 1953 there was a hiatus in science fiction on radio until April 1955 when NBC broadcast the first *X Minus 1*, which ran for three years. A month before *X Minus 1* finished its final season *Exploring Tomorrow* began on Mutual and ended up being the death knell of science fiction.

In addition to the dedicated science fiction programs there were many other programs that included science fiction stories from time to time such as *Suspense*.

Although often low budget many of the science-fiction shows were superbly written and produced. Famous writers who wrote science fiction for radio include Ray Bradbury, Isaac Asimov, Robert Bloch, Robert A. Heinlein, Poul Anderson and Theodore Sturgeon and such top names as Art Carney, Jack Lemmon, Luis Van Rooten, Leon Janney and Santos Ortega were happy to take leading roles.

**NED'S PICKS:** Unlike many other old time radio categories there are so few shows in this category to choose from that they pretty much pick themselves. My top 3 would have been:



- 2000 Plus
- Dimension X
- X Minus 1

## Thrillers



*"Tired of the everyday grind? ... Ever dream of a life of romantic adventure? ... Want to get away from it all? We offer you ... Escape!"*

Those were the opening words of *Escape*; a popular radio program broadcast on the CBS network between 1947 and 1954, but the same words could be used to describe much of the content broadcast on radio during its golden era.

Between 1930 and 1960 radio was literally teeming with programs that were rich in drama, rich in adventure and rich in thrills. It was the ideal format for edge-of-the-seat entertainment. All that was required to be transported daily to strange lands and even stranger situations was a pair of ears and a good imagination – and a radio of course!

One of the undisputed classics of this category would have to be *Suspense*. It was well-loved by both listeners and actors. In 1943 Cary Grant said “If I ever do any more radio work, I want to do it on *Suspense*, where I get a good chance to act”. A large amount of the credit for this series falls at the door of the producer, William Spier, who was often referred to as “the Hitchcock of the airlines”. His talent for bringing together superb scripts with the best acting talent was legendary.

At the more macabre end of the thriller category come two spine-tingling shows; *Lights Out* and *Quiet Please*. Both of these shows were created by the same man, Wyllis Cooper. In 1936 he left to try his hand at Hollywood script writing and Arch Oboler took over as writer, producer and director to much critical acclaim. In 1947 Cooper returned with *Quiet Please* and produced several masterpiece episodes such as *The Thing on the Fourble Board* and *Whence Came You?*

**NED'S PICKS:** It's difficult to keep this list short as there are just so many special shows in this category. Different ones appeal to me for different reasons, but if I had to settle on half a dozen it would have to the following:



- Escape
- Suspense
- Lights Out
- Diary of Fate
- Whistler
- Mysterious Traveller



## Variety & Music

Music played a pivotal role in old time radio. It could be a show in its own right with a leading star of the time such as Bing Crosby, or it could act as an inexpensive filler by using little known orchestras either in a studio or via a remote from a local night spot.

Music was often the easiest and cheapest form of broadcast output to produce. All the station needed to do was bring in a few musicians, provide them with a play list and you had readymade content. It was because of this that a large percentage of early broadcasts were of the musical variety, but as time went on this decreased. By the late 1930s it still accounted for over half of all network programming, but by the end of the war this had fallen to about 40 per cent.

Radio is often credited with introducing serious music to the masses. At the turn of the last century there were only a handful of symphony orchestras in America; by 1951 this number had grown to 650 and over 1,500 U.S. towns and cities held at least one annual series of concerts of serious music.

Radio variety shows were often seen as the off-spring of vaudeville. Acts that had once earned a living travelling from town to town could earn an easier living on radio, but in most cases theatrical acts didn't transfer well to the audio-only medium of radio. There were some notable exceptions such as Edgar Bergen and a ventriloquist's dummy by the name of Charlie McCarthy. Their first appearance was on *The Rudy Vallee Hour*. By 1937 the pair had their very own show and it ran almost continually, with several name changes, until 1956.

### NED'S PICKS:

- Al Jolson Show
- Bing Crosby Show
- Eddie Cantor Show
- Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy Show
- Fitch Bandwagon
- Judy Canova Show



# Chapter 3 - A Quick Guide to the Home Page



1. Quick Search Box.
2. List of old time radio categories.
3. Link to other parts of the sites (articles, surveys, etc)
4. List of shows added over the past few weeks and any other news.
5. Top 10 list of most popular downloads over the past month.
6. Member survey that changes regularly.
7. Enter your e-mail address to be added to the RUSC mailing list.
8. Click here to get help.
9. Click here to go to the download basket.
10. The gold stars indicate shows added recently.

# Chapter 4 - A tour of the RUSC

In the four years since RUSC started I've made every effort to make the site as easy to use as possible. I'm sure you'll have no problems figuring it out for yourself so this section isn't intended to teach you how to suck eggs, but to give you an idea of the various major pages on the site.

## The Home Page

Below is a screen shot of the member's home page.

On the left of the screen is a list of the major old time radio categories of shows such as Comedy, Detective, Drama, etc.

In the middle is a day-by-day list of shows added to the site over the past few weeks.

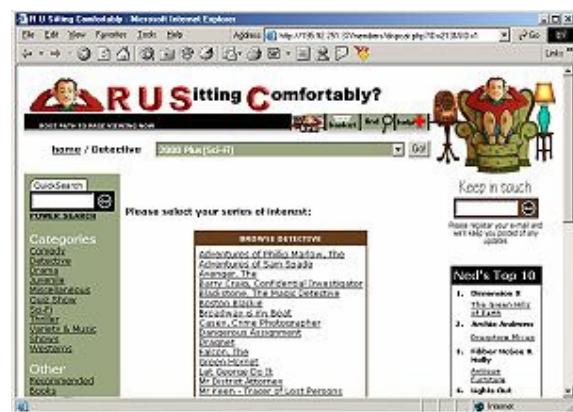
On the right is *Ned's Top 10* of old time radio shows. This is an ever-changing list of the shows that have been downloaded most frequently over the past month and it's a good way of finding out what other members are enjoying.



# The Series Page

If you click on one of the categories listed on the left hand side of the *Home Page* (see above) you'll be taken to the appropriate category page.

The *Series Page* provides you with a list of all the series in that particular category. You can browse the list at your leisure and click on the radio series of your choice.



## The Show Page

When you click on a series from the *Series Page* (see above) you will go to a page containing a listing of all the shows from that particular series. The page will look like the one below.

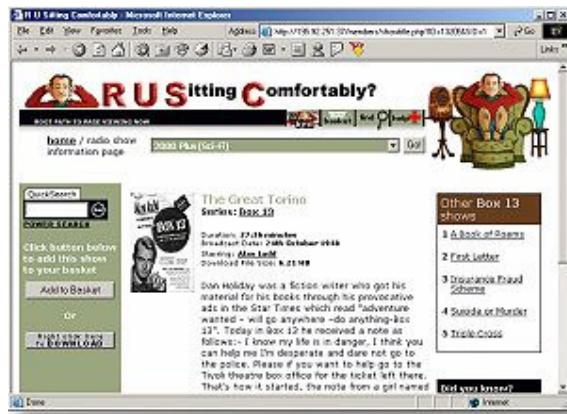
You will see the name of the show and the date it was broadcast. If you want to find out more about that particular radio show just click on the ***Read more about this show...*** link and you will be taken to the ***Show Details*** page.



## The Show Details Page

On the *Show Details page* you get all sorts of useful information on that particular show such as who was the star, length in minutes and seconds, size of the file, the date the show was originally broadcast and a brief review of the show itself. There are also links to find out more about the star of the show or the series itself if you wish.

To download the show to your computer you just need to click on one of the links on the left of the page; **Add to Basket** or **Right Click here to Download**. I'll tell you a little more about downloading in a minute.

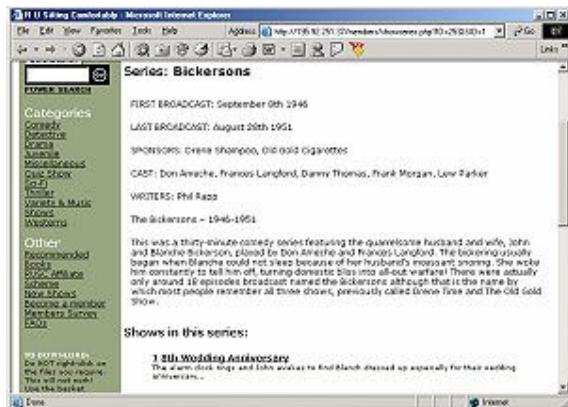


## The Series Information Page

If you want to find out more about any particular series you can click on the appropriate link and you'll arrive at a page that provides you with more detail about that particular series.

Sometimes it is just a brief overview, other times it is a mini essay including information such as when the series was first broadcast and when the final broadcast went out, who sponsored it, the cast members and announcers, writers, theme tune and a potted-history of the show.

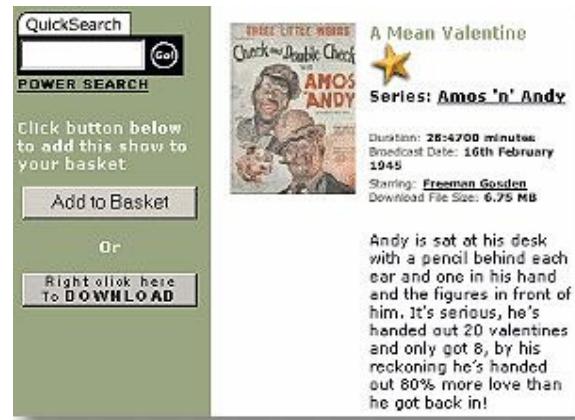
This information can be a useful background resource and makes listening to these wonderful shows even more pleasurable.



## Downloading Shows

When you've decided which shows you want to download you have two options. Click on either the **Add to Basket** button or the **Right click here to download** button.

The **Right Click here to Download** button lets you download any show immediately.



## The download basket

If you want to download a lot of shows then the download basket is a convenient option. All you need to do is click the **Add to Basket** button whenever you see a show you'd like to listen to. When you are ready to start download the shows to your computer just go to your basket by clicking on the basket button at the top of each page.

The download basket is really easy to use. The page lists all the shows you've added to the basket and allows you to download them to your computer. The time taken to do this will vary depending on the speed of your connection to the Internet. On a 56k modem it will take about 20 minutes per show and on a DSL connection it will take as little as a couple of minutes.



As you can see there is nothing complicated about the RUSC Member's site. It allows you to focus on enjoying the thousands of shows that are available rather than get bogged down in technology.

## Chapter 5 - How to Download

This chapter is for those readers who are not familiar with downloading files. If you're used to downloading then I'm sure you'll want to skip this chapter as you're unlikely to learn anything new, but if you're a little unsure then read on.

At the end of the previous chapter I touched on the two different ways to download files from RUSC. In practice they are both very similar, but I'll run through each one in turn so that you have clear instructions for whichever method you choose.

On the screen capture below I've put a yellow circle around the location of the two download options. They're on the bottom left of the *Show Details* page, i.e. the page that gives you the brief description of the show.



## Downloading using the Download Now Button

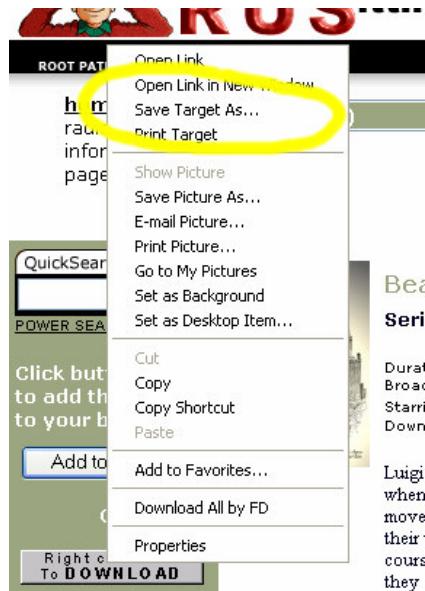
1. Find the show you would like to download. You can do this using any of the methods covered in the chapter on finding shows.
2. Point your mouse at the button labelled *Right Click Here to Download* (see image of button below).



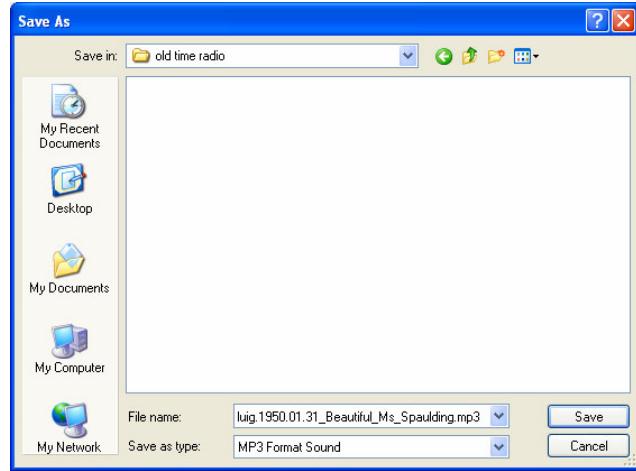
3. When your mouse cursor is over the *Right Click Here to Download* button click **once** on the button on the right-hand side of your mouse.



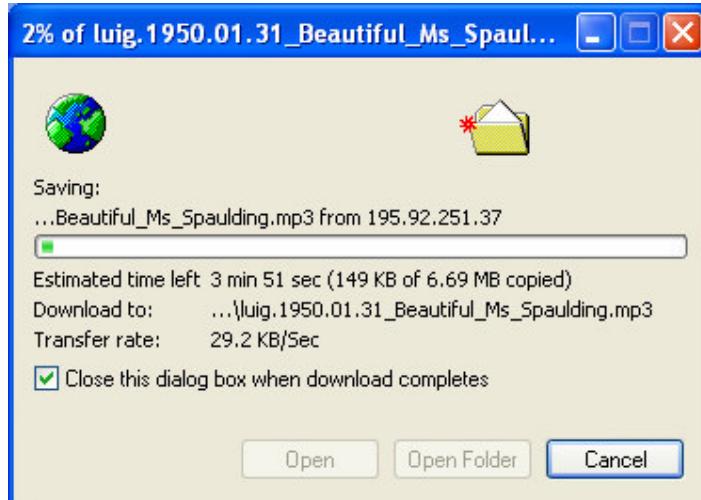
4. A menu will pop up on your screen that will look either the same or very similar to the illustration below.



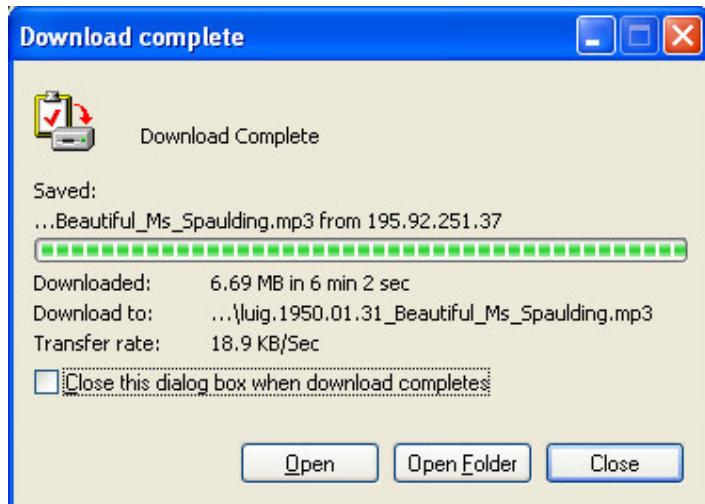
5. Point your mouse at the *Save Target As* option and click once with your left mouse button to select it. If you are using an older version of Windows or a different browser and there is no *Save Target As* option look for something similar such as *Save File As* and click on that instead.
  
6. After a few seconds a box will pop up like the one below. This screen capture was taken from Windows XP so your box may look slightly different if you are using a different version of Windows.



7. If you do not want to save the file into the folder that is displayed (in this case it is a folder called *Old Time Radio*) you can click on the *My Computer* icon on the left to select a different location or create a new folder in which to store the file.
8. You can leave the filename exactly as it is, but make sure that the *Save as type* and the very bottom of the box is listed as MP3 Format Sound or something similar.
9. Click the Save button on the right.
10. After a few second a box like the one below will pop up on your screen displaying the current status of your download. On the box below we can see that the estimated time left is 3 minutes and 51 seconds, that 149KB of 6.69 megabytes have been copied and that the transfer rate is currently 29.2 KB per second.



11. Whilst the file is downloading you can continue to use your computer as normal. Depending on the speed of your computer you should find you can still surf the web and, if you wish, set another file downloading at the same time.
  
12. Depending on which version of Windows you are running you might notice a check box at the bottom next to the words *Close this dialog box when download completes*. If you select this by putting a check mark in the box then the window will vanish once the download has completed, but if you leave it blank you will get a box like the one below once the download has successfully completed.



13. Again this may vary depending on which version of Windows you are using. If you are one of the more recent versions you will probably see three buttons like on the illustration above. If you click Open the show will start playing in your default MP3 player (Windows Media Player for example). If you click on Open Folder the folder to which you saved the file will open and you can listen to the show by double-clicking on the name of the file (see below).
  
14. Once the file has finished downloading it will be stored in the folder you select in step XXXXX above. Follow the steps in *Listening to Shows* to listen to the show you have downloaded.

## Downloading from the Basket

Downloading shows using the basket is almost identical to the method described above. The only difference is that before downloading you add

each show to the download basket by clicking with your left mouse button on the *Add to Basket Button* that appears on the left of each Shows Details screen (circled in yellow below).



1. Once you have selected all the shows you'd like to download click on the Basket icon that appears at the top of each screen.



2. The shows you have added to your basket will be displayed in rows. To download any of these shows you need to right-click once on the download link that appears in the right hand column.
3. To complete the download just follow the steps from 4 onwards detailed in *Downloading using the Download Now Button* above.

You currently have the following titles in your download cart. Right click on *download* link for the file(s) you want and select *Save target as* to download. Alternatively, if your browser has Real Player or other streaming software you can immediately play the file by left clicking (without the streaming your browser will merely download the file). Enjoy!

<b><u>Beautiful Ms Spaulding</u></b> <i>Life with Luigi</i>	<b>6.86Mb</b>	<a href="#">Delete</a>	<a href="#">Download</a>
<b><u>Inside the Line</u></b> <i>Curtain Time</i>	<b>7.79Mb</b>	<a href="#">Delete</a>	<a href="#">Download</a>
<b><u>Ticker Tape Romance</u></b> <i>Curtain Time</i>	<b>7.46Mb</b>	<a href="#">Delete</a>	<a href="#">Download</a>

[Empty All](#)

## Chapter 6 - Listening to shows

Listening to MP3 files on your computer is very easy. The only requirement is that you have MP3 playing software on your computer. All computers over the past couple of years have come with Windows Media player so most users will be up and running immediately. If you find you don't have any MP3 playing software on your computer you can download a free player from WinAmp or dBPowerAmp. Here are the urls:

<http://www.winamp.com>

<http://www.dbpoweramp.com/dbpoweramp.htm>

There are other free MP3 players available, but both of the above come very highly recommended.

To listen to an MP3 file just find the folder that you saved the MP3 files to using either My Computer or the Search feature on your computer. Once you have located the MP3 file you wish to play just double click on it and the file will load automatically and your MP3 player will pop up on your screen.

Here's an example of what the player might look like. Yours may vary depending on the version of Windows you are using and which MP3 software your system defaults to.



Most of the software players work in a similar way. In the Windows Media Player software above you will notice the buttons at the bottom. The Play button is a triangle and the stop button is represented by a square. I'm sure you are familiar with these kind of buttons from your normal home hi-fi or video recorder.

Other controls you will usually have access to from the MP3 player interface will be volume, mute, and a slider bar to allow you to move forward or backward within the MP3 file you are listening to.

Almost all MP3 players have a help facility built in. If you are not familiar with listening to MP3 files on your computer you will find it useful to take a look at those help screens as they are likely to include details of setting up playlists and other advanced features of the software.

# Chapter 7 - Transferring to CD and Cassette

## Copy files to audio CD

There are many different software packages that you can use to burn files to a CDR in a format that can be read by standard CD players such as your home hi-fi or in-car CD player. However, some of the earlier packages will only burn to an audio CD if the original file is in a .WAV format. Fortunately, most of the more recent versions of CD burning software realize that the vast majority of users want to burn .MP3 files and not .WAVs.

One of the most popular packages is Easy CD Creator. This will do much more than just burn audio CDs. It is also a fabulous tool for managing the copying of any data files to CDR.

Here are urls for several CD burning packages so you can take a look at what's on offer in your price range and take your own pick.

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

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

<http://www.net-burner.com/>

<http://www.cd-mate.com/>

<http://www.xcdroast.org/>

<http://www.stompinc.com/clicknburn>

<http://www.roxio.com/en/products/toast/index.jhtml> (for Mac Users)

It's impossible for me to give printed instructions here for each of these packages as they all work in slightly different way. If you follow the instructions that come with each package you should be fine. If you do run into problems I've found the support departments to be pretty helpful on the whole although many of them only offer e-mail support so it can be a little time consuming (and frustrating) getting the necessary help.

## **Time is of the essence**

One thing to remember is that you will only fit 74 minutes on a standard CDR, which means on average you're only going to get two half an hour shows on each CD you burn. Some modern hi-fi systems have the ability to read MP3 CDs, which is wonderful as then you can cram up to 100 half an hour shows on a single disc and listen away to your heart's content without ever having to get out of your armchair, but if you've got a standard CD player you will be limited to that 74 minutes or 80 minutes if you use the high capacity CDRs that are now available.

## **Burning MP3 files to CD**

It doesn't take long to clog up your hard drive with large MP3 files. A typical old time radio show is 30 minutes long. Using standard encoding rates of 32kbps this means an MP3 file of roughly 7 meg. That means you can fit about 142 shows in 1 gigabyte of hard drive space. Luckily large capacity hard drives are pretty standard these days so if you've got 30 or 40 gigabytes spare you can store a lot of shows on your drive without having to worry about copying them to CD.

There are several thousand shows available on RUSC so there is likely to come a time where you decide you want to store them on CD rather than

on your hard drive. To do this is very easy as all CD burning software has the ability to copy MP3 files directly to CD and the great news is that due to the high capacity of CDs you can store a great many files per CD.

On a standard CD you should be able to fit about ninety 30 minute shows. If you use the high capacity 700 meg CDs, which don't cost much more, you'll get about 100 per CD.

Any of the packages listed above will be fine for burning MP3 files straight to CD.

## **Transferring to cassette**

If you want to record MP3 files to cassette you will need a lead to run directly from the "Out" socket on the sound card of your computer to the "In" socket (or phono plugs) of your cassette deck.

Usually this will be something like a stereo jack plug to two standard phono plugs. If this all sounds a bit technical for you don't worry. Give RadioShack a call and they will know exactly the kind of lead you need. The good news is it should only cost you a few dollars at most.

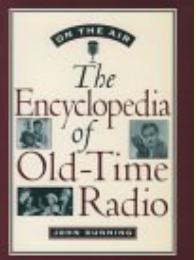
To my knowledge there are three foot and six foot versions of this lead available. At one end is a 1/8" Stereo Phone Plug and at the other there are the standard red and white Phono (RCA) Plugs. The product code at Radioshack is 42-2551, but please double check this before you make the purchase just to make sure you are getting the right lead.

Once you've got the lead setting it up is a simple matter of pressing record on your cassette deck and then playing the file you wish to record on your computer.

The downside of using cassettes rather than burning to CD is that you have to record in real time. That means, if a show is 30 minutes long it will take you 30 minutes to record to cassette so it can all be very time consuming.

## Chapter 8 - Books on Old Time Radio

Below are just a few of the old time radio show books that I've found enjoyable.



**Title:** [The Encyclopedia of Old-Time Radio](#)

**List Price:** \$55.00

**Price on Amazon:** \$38.50

**Pages:** 840 Hardback

### The Encyclopedia of Old-Time Radio

*"An essential reference book for all fans of old-time radio"*

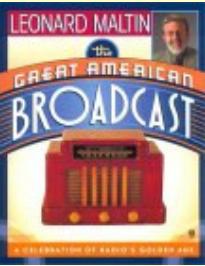
#### **What Amazon say:**

As he did in *Tune in Yesterday: The Ultimate Encyclopedia of Old-Time Radio* (Prentice Hall, 1976), Dunning here provides a storehouse of information about the people and programs of radio's Golden Age (1930s, 1940s, 1950s). The storehouse, however, has been thoroughly remodeled and refurbished. The... [Read more](#)

#### **In my humble opinion:**

I use Dunning's book ALL the time. I can't remember the last time I put it back on the bookshelf - it is always on my desk. It's so thick that it can double-up as an excellent foot stool. Whenever I'm scratching my head about anything relating to old radio shows I turn to this book first - every time. Its 840 pages are packed with very readable information about virtually every old time radio series ever broadcast. If you enjoy old radio shows and you don't have a copy of this wonderful book you're missing out. *Ned*

[Click here to purchase the book from Amazon or view more information](#)



**Title:** [The Great American Broadcast](#)

**List Price:** \$17.95

**Price on Amazon:**  
\$12.56

**Pages:** 324  
Paperback

## Great American Broadcast

*"A delightful, heavily illustrated history of radio."*

Publishers Weekly

### **What The New York Times book Review had to say:**

"...Leonard Maltin brings the same seemingly boundless enthusiasm and encyclopedic recall previously devoted to film to the so-called Golden Age of broadcasting..." [Read more](#)

### **What Larry King had to say:**

"Highly recommended."

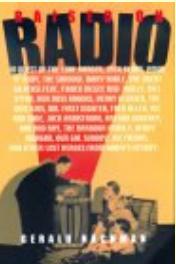
### **What The New York Daily News had to say:**

"[A] fascinating anecdotal history."

### **In my humble opinion:**

I found this book to be like a pleasant stroll down memory lane. It was easy to read, full of interesting little tidbits, and includes some great photos. It's not intended to be an encyclopedia like Dunning's book (see above), more of a documentary on old time radio and the people who worked in the industry.*Ned*

[Click here to purchase the book from Amazon or view more information](#)



**Title:** [Raised on Radio](#)

**List Price:** \$18.95

**Price on Amazon:**  
\$13.26

**Pages:** 535  
Paperback

## Raised on Radio

*"I doubt I've ever read a book with a higher count of sparkling anecdotes per chapter"*

Dennis Drabelle  
Washington Post Book World

### **What Mel Gussow had to say in The New York Times:**

"There have been many books written on the subject, but none that I know of that is written with such verve and joyful sense of rediscovery." [Read more](#)

### **In my humble opinion:**

I started reading this book whilst on vacation and couldn't put it down. It is full of anecdotes and Nachman does a great job of adding his own personal viewpoints and experiences without making the book in anyway autobiographical or overly opinionated. The book has no photographs padding out the pages, so at 535 pages it represents excellent value for money and provides a darned good read. If you're looking for a good non-fiction book to curl up with this one comes highly recommended. *Ned*

[Click here to purchase the book from Amazon or view more information](#)



**Title:** [Handbook of Old-Time Radio](#)

**List Price:** \$97.50

**Price on Amazon:**

\$97.50

**Pages:** 806

Hardback

## The Handbook of Old-Time Radio

*"...the best old-time radio book published since 1976*

*.... this is definitely a book all OTR buffs can use.... "*

The Big Reel

### ***What Inside Collector had to say:***

"...impressive reference to the Golden Age of radio... A tremendous body of research, it belongs in every collector's library."

### ***What Airwaves had to say:***

"It is worth the price because it is so complete....recommend it highly for the serious OTR fan."

### ***And here's the description from the Publishers web site:***

Intended for both the casual listener and the serious hobbyist or researcher, this one-volume handbook includes a descriptive log of more than 2,000 different programs, with casts, announcers, network, length of program, duration of appearance, availability, and, where appropriate, story lines; categorized logs of more than 4,500 programs, organized by type of program; separate characters covering each type of program, with historical information and guidelines for researching and understanding each category of old-time radio programming; descriptions of the better-known premiums offered during radio's Golden Age; a history of the networks; a chapter on resources available for those interested in acquiring old-time programs, reference material, and/or memorabilia; and indexes of over 8,000 performers and program titles.

*In my humble opinion:*

This is not a cheap book. At nearly \$100 it is probably one of the most expensive books that I've purchased. However, over the years I have consulted it many many times and so in comparison to other books that I have only looked at a handful of times I suppose it represents excellent value for money. I've found it particularly useful for looking up details of shows that are not mentioned anywhere else and it is always one of the first books I turn to whenever I need facts and broadcast data on a series. The Encyclopedia of Old-Time Radio that is reviewed above is probably a better bet for most collectors, but if you already have that and are looking to add to your library then this should be high on your list.

[Click here to purchase the book from Amazon or view more information](#)

## Chapter 9 - Useful Software

To enjoy old time radio shows all you really need is some good MP3 playing software, but there are a whole host of other packages that may interest you for a variety of reasons. I've listed some of these on the following pages.

I do use many of these packages myself so I can recommend them very highly, but don't take my word for it as software can be a very personal thing.

If you enjoy trying out software I can recommend the following locations as excellent sources for MP3 software and related tools and utilities.

[www.shareware.com](http://www.shareware.com)

[www.sharewarejunction.com](http://www.sharewarejunction.com)

[www.tucows.com](http://www.tucows.com)

[www.completelyfreesoftware.com](http://www.completelyfreesoftware.com)

[www.simtel.net](http://www.simtel.net)

[www.palmgear.com](http://www.palmgear.com) (one of my favourites for Palm software)

## dBPowerAmp

**Category:** MP3 Player

**Publisher:** Illustrate

**Operating System:** Windows

**Price:** Free



Illustrates fantastic dBpowerAMP Audio Player (dAP), if ever there was a complete player this is it! dAP plays **Mp3s**, **WMA**, **Ogg Vorbis**, **Monkeys Audio**, **Real Audio**, **Wave** and **Midi**, and many more, something for everyone:

- **Crossfader** - fades old tracks out whilst fading in new, just like having a DJ,
- **Visualizations** (Spectrum analyzer, oscilloscope),
- On Screen **Mini Controls** - take control of dAP, anytime anywhere,
- Built-in **Music Collection** database,
- **Track Preference Playback** - your favorite tracks get played the most!
- Advanced **Selective Playback** - listen to the tracks you want to hear.
- **ID Tag editor** - edit Artist, Track information,
- Auto **volume normalization** - no more fiddling with the volume knob, volume normalize makes all your tracks the same volume,
- **Playlist Editor**,
- **Graphic Equalizer** - digitally enhance your music,
- Fast **track search** engine - quickly (as in 4 key presses) locate any track,
- Folder watch - automatically adds new tracks to dBpowerAMP,
- Superb **Skin Editor** - release the artist, go forth and create,
- Complete range of **Codecs** - play just about any audio type
- **100% Free**.

## WinAmp

**URL:** [www.winamp.com](http://www.winamp.com)

**Category:** MP3 Player

**Publisher:** Nullsoft

**Operating System:** Windows and Mac

**Price:** Free

Winamp is an audio player that can handle audio CDs, MP3 audio files, and streaming audio broadcasts. It combines extensive functionality with an intuitive interface. Winamp features a playlist editor and a 10-band graphic equalizer with user-definable presets that can automatically load specific files. It also includes Windows Media Technology 4.0 input/output support and the industry-standard Fraunhofer MP3 decoder. This download no longer includes VIS/DSP plug-ins; you can download them separately.



## Easy CD Creator

**URL:** [www.roxio.com](http://www.roxio.com)

**Category:** CD Burning

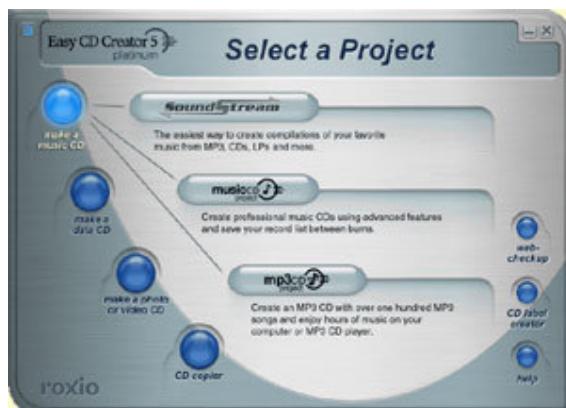
**Publisher:** Roxio

**Operating System:** Windows (if you have a Mac see Toast below)

**Price:** \$99 or less

*Here is the description from the Roxio web site:*

Upgrade to Easy CD Creator 5 Platinum and go way beyond the DVD or CD burning software that came with your DVD or CD burner. Now you can burn and share anything on CD - your music just the way you like it, your photos, your videos - even backup your critical data to a CD or DVD - faster and easier than ever. Record from CDs or LPs, and work on MP3 to CD projects to create your own high quality music CDs. Make collections of your photos and create powerful slide shows and video presentations to share with family or for business. The sleek new interface makes simple work of the most complex task.



## Toast 5

**URL:** [www.roxio.com](http://www.roxio.com)

**Category:** CD Burning

**Publisher:** Roxio

**Operating System:** Mac

**Price:** \$99 or less

*Here is the description from the Roxio web site:*



Toast™ 5 Titanium is the comprehensive, all-in-one DVD and CD burner software that enables you to create, organize, share and store all of your digital content on CDs or DVDs.

With Toast 5 Titanium DVD and CD burner software, you can preserve and share your music, data, photos, and video on CD or DVD! Turn your digital photos into a video slide show CD or burn your iMovie productions onto Video CDs that are playable on most DVD players. Turn scratchy LPs and cassettes into crystal clear CDs. Convert MP3s into professional audio CDs or burn them on MP3 discs that hold hours of music. Protect your valuable data on CDs or share it with Windows PC users. Print custom labels and cases for your new CDs. The perfect burning companion to iMovie, iTunes, and DVD authoring software that burns fast, burns clean, burns on more drives, and now burns in the background too.

## **dBpowerAMP Music Converter**

**URL:** <http://www.dbpoweramp.com/dmc.htm>

**Category:** File Conversion

**Publisher:** Illustrate

**Operating System:** PC

**Price:** Free

Converting files from one format to another is not something that everyone will want to do, but if you do have a need for such software then I can really recommend this excellent utility. I've been using it for a couple of years now and it always amazes me that it is free as it is so well written.

*Here's the description from the Illustrate Web Site:*

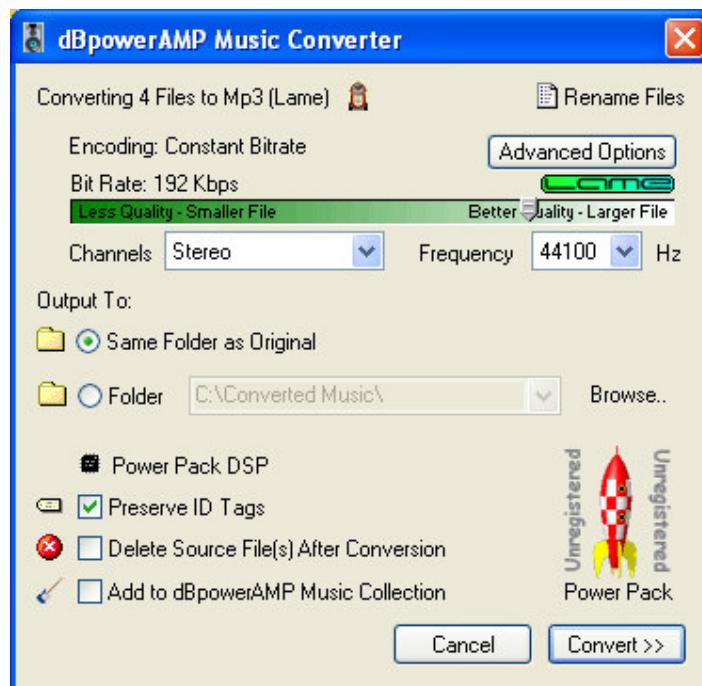
dBpowerAMP Music Converter (dMC), is one of those must have utilities, indispensable for converting audio files from one format to another. Part of dMCs formidable arsenal, is its ability to rip music straight from Audio CDs!, or LPs [optional install].

Straight out of the box dMC can convert to and from Wave, Mp3 and from CD Audio (CDA) files.

Codec downloads add Windows Media Audio v8 (WMA) , Ogg Vorbis and many more types to the table. Features include:

- Volume Normalization - have all audio tracks use same volume.
- ID Tag preservation & Editing - keep those ID tags between conversions.
- Explorer Audio Info Pop-ups - display useful information on an audio file in explorer.

- Convert To - simplest way of converting right click on a file and select Convert To.
- Send audio to your Portable Mp3 Player with Sveta Portable Audio.
- Fully compatible with Windows 95/98/ME NT4/2000 and Windows XP.



## Where Is It

**URL:** <http://www.whereisit-soft.com/>

**Category:** File Cataloguing

**Publisher:** Robert Galle

**Operating System:** PC

**Price:** \$39.95

Once you have lots of MP3 files on your computer and copied to various CDs it can be difficult keeping a track of what you've got. *WhereIs-It* does a wonderful job of keeping track of everything and I've been a loyal user for a few years now.

*Here's what it says on the WhereIs-It Web Site:*

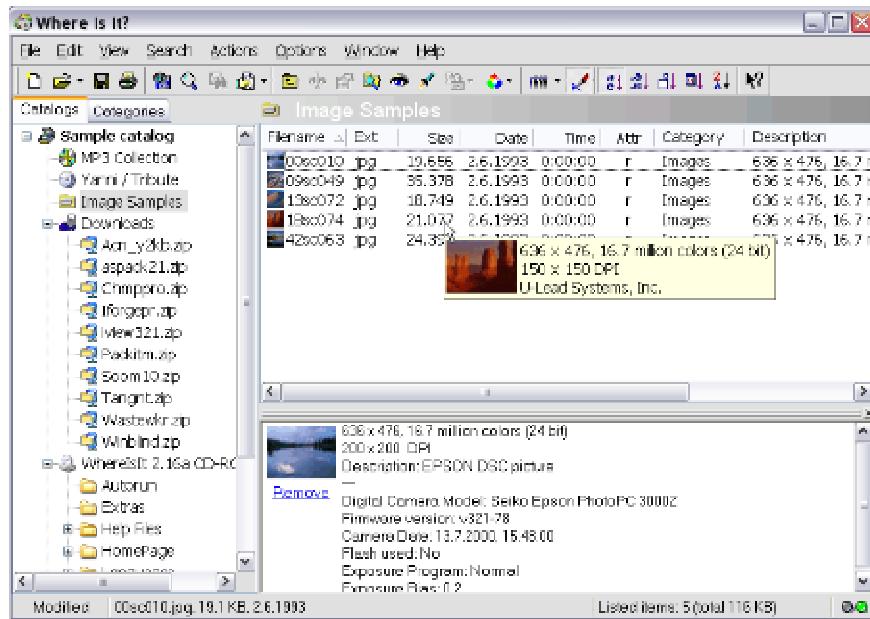
Welcome to WhereIsIt-Soft.com, the home of Where Is It? cataloging software. WhereIsIt is an application written for 32-bit Windows operating systems, designed to help you maintain and organize a catalog of your computer media collection, including CD-ROMs, audio CDs, diskettes, removable drives, hard drives, network drives, DVDs, or any other media that Windows can access as a drive. The most basic goal for WhereIsIt is to provide access to the contents of any media you have from a cataloged database, even if the media itself is not available on the system - you can browse lists of files and folders, search by any criteria, use descriptions, thumbnails, categories, flags, etc.

WhereIsIt can be used to handle any kind of data, including downloaded programs, magazine CD-ROMs, music collections like MP3s or audio CDs, graphics collections, document backups, etc. WhereIsIt can handle lots of them too, several thousand disks in a catalog is nothing unusual, yet catalogs remain reasonably small, single-filed and easy to transfer or

send to other users. You can also create more than one catalog, and at any time open and work with as many catalogs at once as needed.

WhereIsIt is easy to use for both beginners and advanced users. It features a familiar and well thought-out, Explorer-like user interface, combined with strong searching and reporting capabilities, multi-language support, automated description and thumbnails importing through extendable plugins from more than 70 different sources, and much more.

During the last four years, more than 37.000 users have chosen WhereIsIt. Find out why, download your free evaluation copy now!



# Chapter 10 - Frequently Asked Questions

## ***Hardware Related***

### **Some of the files I have downloaded don't work on my portable MP3 player. What should I do?**

Some portable MP3 players do not like files encoded in certain bit rates. Most of the files on RUSC are encoded at 32kbps (kilo-bits-per-second), but there are a few at other rates. If you do have a file that won't go onto your portable player and you are desperate to hear it there is one sure fire way of getting round the problem. Download one of the WAV-to-MP3 converters from a site such as [www.tucows.com](http://www.tucows.com) or [www.hotfiles.com](http://www.hotfiles.com). Convert the file to a WAV file and then convert it back to MP3 in a bit rate that is suitable for your MP3 player, 32kbps is usually ideal for spoken word and is a good compromise between quality and file size. If what I have just said sounds a little too complex for you then you are probably best just putting the offending file to one side and downloading another file for your MP3 player.

### **Do I need any special software to play these MP3 files?**

Most PCs and Macs come with software that will play MP3 files. However, if you find that your system does not have compatible audio software then there is a wide selection of software MP3 players available for downloading (Winamp, UltraPlayer, MusicMatch, etc.). You can download any of these players and many more from popular download sites such as [www.tucows.com](http://www.tucows.com) or [www.hotfiles.com](http://www.hotfiles.com). One very popular

player that is completely free is Winamp. You can download a copy by going to [www.winamp.com](http://www.winamp.com).

## **Will the shows on RUSC work on my RIO500?**

They certainly will. I used a RIO 500 for quite a while (an excellent player I thought) and had no trouble at all with the vast majority of files. Every now and again there might be a file it takes a dislike to and won't allow you to upload it, but this will be very rare and is usually down to the sampling rate of the file in question.

## **Recently, when I click on an MP3 file another MP3 player has started to pop up rather than my favorite one. How can I make my original player the default player?**

Some software packages take over the file associations without giving proper warning to the user. There are two easy ways that you can get around this problem.

The first solution is to change the file associations in Windows. The instructions below will tell you how to do this. It's a very easy procedure and only takes a minute.

1. Click on Start.
2. Click on Settings.
3. Select Control Panel.
4. Open Folder Options in Control Panel.
5. On the File Types tab click the file type that you want to change (.mp3 for example).
6. Click the Change button.

7. Select the application you want to associate with this file type (Winamp, RealPlayer, etc)
8. Make sure that the tick box next to "Always use this program to open these files" is checked.
9. Click OK to save the association.

Click OK again to close the Folder Options window.

Another solution that usually works is to reinstall the package that you want to be the default player. In most cases the process of reinstalling will change the file associations back to those of your chosen package (i.e. the one you install last becomes the default player). This is not a guaranteed solution, but it usually works and it does no harm.

## **Is there an easy way to catalog the files that I have downloaded?**

I use a wonderful piece of software called *WhereIs-It*. I've been using it for a few years now and have everything catalogued with it. It will catalog absolutely any kind of file so you are not restricted to just MP3 files. I don't know what I would do without it.

It will catalog the files on your hard drive or on CD, or any other media come to that.

All you need to do is insert each CD one at a time or tell it which hard drive or directory you want to catalog and *WhereIs-It* will retrieve the filenames from each and store them in its database. You can then do all sorts of things such as print out listings of what is on each CD. It is also VERY quick for finding shows. For example, if you wanted a list of all

the Shadows you've downloaded just enter SHAD into the search box and it will tell you which CD or CDs they are on.

Whereisit is shareware so you can try it out for 30 days (or something like that) and then only register if you like it.

The url is [www.whereisit-soft.com](http://www.whereisit-soft.com) and the man who wrote it is excellent at providing support and keeping the software up-to-date.

I tried lots of alternatives before I went with *WhereIs-It* and didn't find anything that was nearly as good.

## ***Membership Related FAQs***

### **Is the membership payment system secure?**

The whole of the payment system for RUSC is stored on secure servers that are certified by Thawte, which is one of the largest and more respected certification organizations in the world.

Whenever you are thinking of paying for something online it is worth following these golden rules.

1. The url should start with https and not the normal http. You can check this by looking at the url address line at the top of your browser window. Https indicates the page is stored on a secure server.
2. In the task bar at the bottom of your screen there should be a little icon of a lock.
3. There is one more thing you can do just to be completely certain although this is probably overkill. If you are in one of the later versions of Internet Explorer you can click on File and then select Properties. At the bottom is a button that says Certificates, click on that. A window will open detailing the status of the secure server. There's three tabs you can click through and these will tell you who issued the secure certificate (in the case of CCBill it was Thawte who are one of the biggest certificate issuers in the world), and that it is valid until August 2003 and that the certificate status is ok.

Not a lot of people bother with this final step of checking the certification, but it does bring added peace of mind I suppose.

I've been using CCBill for nearly four years now and have always found them to be very secure and reliable.

## **How much does membership cost?**

The cost of membership depends on which of the three membership options you choose. The monthly recurring membership costs \$7.50. The quarterly recurring membership is \$18.00 per quarter, which means you save \$4.50 on the normal monthly membership. The annual membership costs \$60, which is a saving of \$30 on the standard monthly membership. There is also a three-day trial membership for just \$2.95, which converts automatically to the monthly membership if you do not cancel within the first three days.

## **What does recurring mean?**

It simply means that you don't have to go through the hassle of rejoining at the end of each membership period (e.g. month, quarter or year). Your card will simply be charged automatically for the next period without you having to do anything. You can cancel your membership whenever you want. There is no minimum length of time you must be a member. You could, if you wanted, cancel during your first month of membership if you wish, but I am pleased to say that most recurring members stick around for a lot longer.

## **My username and password don't appear to be working?**

Usernames and passwords are case sensitive so the first thing to do is to check that you are entering them correctly. Make sure you don't have the

CapsLock key on for example. If you know you are a current member of RUSC and are having difficulty entering with your username and password send an e-mail to me at [ned@rusc.com](mailto:ned@rusc.com).

## **What should I do if I forget my password?**

If you forget your username or password don't worry. Just send me an e-mail and I will look it up for you. For security reasons it is best if you can include your name and zip code (or postal code for anyone outside of the US). It's also useful if you can include your subscription number (it should have appeared on the e-mail you received when you first became a member), but don't worry if you can't track it down.

## **How do I cancel my membership?**

Cancelling your membership is easy. You can do it whenever you want.

All you need to do is go to:

[https://www.ccbill.com/system/cancel\\_by\\_id.cgi](https://www.ccbill.com/system/cancel_by_id.cgi)

If you can't remember your sign-up details go to:

<https://www.ccbill.com/system/member.cgi>

and select Cancel Subscription from the list of options. Just enter your details and CCBill's secure automated system will do the rest for you. Of course, if you have any problems please do not hesitate to send me an e-mail to [ned@rusc.com](mailto:ned@rusc.com).

## **Can I pay using PayPal?**

Yes you can! CCBill is preferable to PayPal as it provides you with instant access and is easier for me, but if you get rejected by CCBill (this can happen in certain countries outside of the US for security reasons) or would prefer to use PayPal then go to <http://www.rusc.com/paypal.html>

## **How soon after payment will I have access to RUSC?**

You'll have immediate access! The sign-up process takes about two-minutes and that's it. As long as your credit card or on-line check is valid then you are straight into the members area are ready to start downloading.

## **How many shows can I download each month?**

To make sure that the site operates at an optimal speed for ALL members you are limited to seven hundred and seventy-five shows per month (roughly 25 per day). I'm sure you'll agree that this is a very large amount, roughly the same as eight CD-ROM fulls per month, and most members would never need to download more than this in a single month. The reason for having a limit is some unscrupulous people with ultra high-speed connections were joining up for the three-day trial and then downloading hundreds of shows each day and this would slow the system down for everyone else, which didn't seem fair.

## **How do I change my monthly subscription to a quarterly subscription?**

There isn't currently a way of swapping from monthly billing to quarterly billing. The only way to change a subscription from monthly to quarterly is to cancel the monthly subscription and then resubscribe on the quarterly subscription.

## **How many shows are there on RUSC?**

At the time of writing this answer there are over 3,500 and this is growing daily, except for on a Wednesday when I have a little rest. There are at least thirty shows added each week, but usually quite a few more than that.

## **Old Time Radio FAQs**

### **What is the situation regarding copyright?**

All the shows on RUSC are believed to be in the public domain. In addition the membership fee is a contribution towards hardware costs, server space, bandwidth and general administration, it is not a payment for the shows themselves. There is absolutely no charge, implied or otherwise, for the shows themselves. The shows are made available free of charge to members of RUSC. If you feel you have any claim over the copyright for any of the shows on RUSC please let me know and I will take immediate steps to remove the shows in question.

### **What exactly is Old Time Radio?**

Old Time Radio, or OTR as it is often known, is a catch-all term for radio shows broadcast in a period that started in the late 1920s and finished in the early 1960s. This period is also often called the Golden Age of Radio. It is a period when radio was king of all broadcast media. TV either didn't exist or was very much in its infancy. It's hard to imagine today just how powerful and popular radio was in those days.

Programming was much more varied during this period than it is today. There were comedy shows, detectives by the dozen, thrillers, drama, quiz shows, and many more genres. Lots of people, myself included, would also say that the quality of radio broadcasting was far higher than it is now.

If you've never heard a radio broadcast from this period why not try out

some of the shows available in the non-members area by clicking on the "Shows for non-members link".

## **Which series are available on RUSC?**

There is a list of many of the series available on RUSC that can be accessed via the web. The url is:

[www.old-time-radio.rusc.com](http://www.old-time-radio.rusc.com)

I must stress that this is in no way a complete list of all the series available on RUSC, but I do hope to bring it more up to date over the next couple of months.

## **What does it mean when it says a show is transcribed?**

Transcribed means it was recorded for broadcasting at a later date. Often a show would be broadcast live on the East Coast, for example, and then a few hours later the recording of that show would be broadcast on the West Coast or in other parts of America. Usually, this was done to make sure the big shows reached the peak time audience in each time zone. Sometimes it would be due to the show being syndicated to lots of small local radio stations over a lengthy period of time.

## ***Other FAQs***

### **I sent you an e-mail and haven't had a response yet?**

I do my best to respond to all e-mails as quickly as I can and usually manage to get a response out within 24 hours. There are no staff at RUSC, it's just me, and RUSC is a hobby and not a business so sometimes I get tied up on other things, I might be on vacation or just feeling under the weather. So saying, even when I'm away you will usually find that I manage to log on from somewhere and respond so the most likely explanation is your e-mail has gone astray and is floating around in cyberspace somewhere. If you don't hear back from me within 48 hours it is well worth sending me a gentle reminder just in case I didn't get it the first time around.

### **What audio format are the files on RUSC?**

All of the files on RUSC are in the very popular MP3 format. This is probably the most popular audio file format on the web. It is ideal for playing on PCs and Macs, and will work with every portable MP3 player on the market.

### **What is RUSC's Privacy Policy?**

RUSC will **never** give your e-mail address or any other personal information to a third party for marketing purposes or for any other reason.

- RUSC does not use cookies or other tools to gather your personal information.
- RUSC will not send unsolicited e-mails.
- RUSC will gladly remove you from the RUSC Newsletter mailing list at your request.

## **The files seem to be downloading as .MPEG files and not .MP3 files**

Every file on RUSC is in a standard .MP3 format and can be used with any popular MP3 software player or portable device. However, from time to time I receive an e-mail from a member saying that the shows are downloading to their computer as .MPEG files and not .MP3 files.

I don't know exactly what causes this problem to happen on some people's computers, but thanks to the input of several members it seems to be something to do with file associations.

When you install certain applications they will adjust the file associations accordingly. For example if you install some new MP3 playing software it may prompt you whether you want the new player to be the default player, which would mean the new application will run automatically whenever you click on a .MP3 file.

Unfortunately, some software packages have a nasty habit of literally taking over certain file associations and this can cause the kind of problem you are encountering with .MP3 files being renamed .MPEG files.

*A possible solution:*

Several members who had this problem and solved it successfully did it by removing RealAudio completely from their system. It seems that RealAudio and RealJukebox change various settings on your computer and once they have been removed your system performs as it should do. To remove these applications just follow these steps:

1. Click on Start
2. Click on Settings
3. Click on Control Panel
4. Select Add/Remove Programs
5. A list of all the applications on your system will appear. Look down the list and when you see RealAudio and/or Real Jukebox highlight it by clicking on it with your mouse and then click on the Add/Remove button.
6. Repeat above until you have removed RealAudio and Real Jukebox.
7. Exit all applications.
8. Reboot your computer.

Hopefully, this will fix the problem and your files will now download as .MP3 files and not .MPEG files.

*A temporary fix*

The files on RUSC are .MP3 files and it is your system that is giving them the extension .MPEG. To prevent this from happening make sure that when you save the file to your hard drive you add .MP3 to the end of the filename for each file. The files should then be stored as .MP3 files and not .MPEG or anything else.

You can also rename any files you might have already downloaded by finding them on your system and then selecting File>Rename and adding the .MP3 extension on the end and they will then work just like any .MP3 file.

## ***Website Related (Using RUSC)***

### **How do I download shows to my computer?**

There is a whole section on downloading in this little booklet, but here's a quick overview. There are two ways of downloading shows to your computer. You can either use the basket or use the "Right-Click To Download Now Button". The last option is probably the easiest to get started with.

**Step 1:** Find the show you would like to download by clicking on the links until you get to the page containing details of that show.

**Step 2:** On the left hand side you will see two buttons. Use your mouse to right-click on the button labelled "Right-Click To Download Now Button" (i.e. you use your right hand mouse button rather than the normal left hand mouse button).

**Step 3:** A little menu will pop-up. From this select the "Save Target As..." or "Save File As ..." option (it may be worded slightly differently on your system) and press Enter or left-click with your mouse.

**Step 4:** A dialog box will pop-up asking where you want to save the file. Select whichever folder you like on your hard drive in the usual way and then click OK.

**Step 5:** The file should now start downloading to your computer. The time taken to completely download the file will vary depending on the speed of your connection, but it will usual taking about 20 minutes per show on a 56k modem and just a few minutes on cable or DSL connections.

**Step 6:** To play the file on your computer all you need to do is go to the folder in which you stored the file and double-click on it. This should open your default MP3 player and play the file.

## **When I try to log in as a member I am getting a 404 page not found message. What should I do?**

Occasionally, the RUSC server will not be available. After entering your username and password you will get an error page that usually says 404 page not found. Don't worry, this will just be temporary. It usually means I am doing some important maintenance work, uploading more shows, or fixing a glitch in the system. This kind of work usually only takes a few hours so if you find that after 24 hours you are still getting the same message then please e-mail me at [ned@rusc.com](mailto:ned@rusc.com).

## **How often is RUSC updated?**

I do my best to update the site with new shows every single day except Wednesday when I take a rest.

## **Can members request specific shows or series?**

You certainly can. A lot of what appears on RUSC is driven by member requests. Whether it is a specific show, a specific series or more of a certain genre just let me know and I will do my best to oblige.

## **What kind of radio shows are available on RUSC?**

RUSC specializes in the genre usually known as OTR, or old time radio. Another term for it would be The Golden Age of Radio. Most of the shows are from three decades; 1930's, 1940's and 1950's. This was a fabulous time in radio and shows from this era are as enjoyable today as they were when they were first broadcast. You'll find a very wide variety of shows available on RUSC; detective shows, thrillers, science fiction, comedy shows, musical and variety programs, and even quiz shows. With over 2,500 shows to choose from you will be spoilt for choice.

## **What do the gold stars mean?**

The gold stars that appear next to some of the entries indicate that the show in question has been added to the system within the last twenty days.