

RADIOSCOPE CHARTS: With Paul Kennedy

Radioscope is an independent data collection agency established in 1999. The majority of their work is carried out for RIANZ (Recording Industry Association of New Zealand), IMNZ (Independent Music New Zealand), NZ On Air, the RBA (Radio Broadcasting Association), and the Minister of Broadcasting.

DOES RADIO PLAY COUNT TOWARDS PLACING FOR SINGLES AND ALBUMS?

With the Top 40 charts, singles, albums, and compilations/DVD's are 100% sales. The only area that airplay has a role in is the **airplay chart**. There used to be a component of airplay in the singles chart but that was removed in 2010. The market is now big and strong enough that with the volumes of digital sales becoming healthy, it is now just 100% sales.

HOW DOES AN SONG BECOME CHART ELEGIBLE?

To get on to the charts, all you have to do is sell copies of it. There's no particular registration process to go through. It is helpful to get in touch with Radioscope to let them know that something is coming out so they're aware of it and make sure they have the right spelling and distribution information. If you're releasing it digitally, Radioscope can enter codes into the system to help recognize the same song for that week and the following weeks ahead.

HOW DOES AN ALBUM BECOME CHART ELIGIBLE?

It's the same situation. Radioscope collects data from all the major physical sellers (The Warehouse, JB Hifi, Marbecks, Real Groovy etc) and the smaller independent record stores around the country. They also collect information from all the digital sellers (iTunes, Digirama, Vodafone Telecom etc) and as soon as you sell a copy from any of those channels, Radioscope will immediately begin to track it.

HOW ARE ALBUM AND SINGLE SALES STATISTICS MEASURED PHYSICALLY AND DIGITALLY?

There's no difference between a physical sale and a digital sale. If you sell your CD in a store regardless of the price, it counts as a sale. Same as when you sell a version of that album on iTunes it is also counted as a sale. There is no specific weighting for physical vs digital.



HOW ARE RADIO PLAY STATISTICS MEASURED?

Radio is a little bit different. There's a combination of ways that Radioscope get their information. A monitoring system is used to track plays as they happen on the bigger networks and more established stations. Other data comes in directly from the station themselves with a provided log to show what they played the week before. There are 60 stations Radioscope track with a weighting process. If you get your song played on a big station that has 400,000 listeners a week, it will earn you a certain number of points vs. getting your song played on a radio station in a little town with a small listenership. There's a set of tiers of 10 levels of stations with a set of other charts that are format based. All the Rock stations go to one pool and we do a Rock chart for them, as well as pop stations and urban stations etc. That information is not only used for the charts, but it is used by PPNZ for royalty distribution. It's important that if you've got a song that's going out to radio, it's good to let Radioscope know. If you see it pop up on the chart, confirm with Radioscope who the owner or distributor is so they can track it back. When it comes to the end of the year when PPNZ hand out their royalty money, they'll be using these statistics to base that on.

WHAT SALES QUALIFY AS GOLD AND PLATINUM STATUS?

Albums in New Zealand:

7,500 = Gold
15,000 = Platinum
30,000 = Double Platinum
45,000 = Triple Platinum
... and so forth.

There is no difference between physical and digital sales. With physical sales, it's based on wholesale figures. Once the record company sells 7,500 copies of something to the retailers, that's gold. It doesn't necessarily mean that it has sold that many to customers yet, but once the stock is out there the assumption is that it will then be sold over time so the release will go gold early. Digital is a little bit different because there are no wholesale sales. You put your file out there, and however many customers buy it, that's a retail sale. Physical sales, wholesale, plus anything you've sold digitally gives you a figure, and once that goes over 7,500 then you are gold. Singles have the same threshold. The difference with singles is, that they are almost all digital sales now that physical singles barely exist.

IF I SELL MY CD'S AT A GIG, OR SELL DIRECT TO A CONSUMER, CAN THOSE SALES COUNT TOWARDS BEING CHARTED?

Yes you can, it's called **direct to consumer sales**. There are a few more hoops you need to jump through to ensure that we can rely on the figures. Initially, you or your distributor needs to be a member of RIANZ and become approved as a data provider. There's a form you can download from the RIANZ site or Radioscope site, that you can take on the road with you if you're selling CD's at gigs where you can tally up at the end of the night, with signatures from someone representing the performer, the label, and someone from the venue. You can then send the form through to Radioscope at the end of the week to tally up.



HOW HAVE PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL SALES COMPARED OVER THE LAST 5 YEARS?

There's been a huge change in the industry. Physical sales have suffered a lot, and the number of physical retailers has reduced. 5 years ago there would have been a larger number of people contributing to that pool of sales, now they have consolidated into the major chains and there is the odd independent store here and there. Digital sales on the other hand have boomed. Initially, New Zealand had not much online digital music sold because iTunes wasn't here, and the companies that had launched were very low key and still establishing themselves. But, the mobile market boomed around 2005. iTunes came along in 2007, and now they have the lion's share of the digital market. Digital sales are growing, but unfortunately not at the same rate that physical sales are falling away.

