First of all I will give to you some short hints on the radio station I have the great luck, I must confess, to work in. My radio is what is called in Germany a „öffentlich rechtliche Rundfunkanstalt“, somehow untranslatable to any other language I guess. A system of fee-based public stations, would be the one of the better translations, and fee based radio in Germany means, don’t forget, the obligation of every household to pay some 4 of 5 Euros to have the legitimation to listen to a radio program. The other 12 or 13 Euros one has to pay for television, by the way. But this legitimation has to be paid even if the fee-paying households even don’t listen to the DeutschlandRadio Berlin for example, that’s the name of the station I’m working for, and above all this legitimation has to be paid even if the household has never ever have heard of the existence of this particular, of my radio station. That is for the beginning kind of part of our problem, not a special one but the part of our problem in general when it comes to speak about German Radio in general.

My station, Deutschland Radio Berlin, is one part of two nationwide programs connected together under the roof of one institution called again DeutschlandRadio. The other program under the same roof is the socalled DeutschlandFunk in Cologne, a politics orientated program, which was founded in 1962, shortly after the construction of the Berlin-wall in 1961, and has a very traditional programming structure as well, but very successful in reaching to more than 1,1 Million people daily. My program, the DeutschlandRadio Berlin is younger, founded in 1995, and was originally assembled out of two older radio stations, one from western Berlin, called RIAS Berlin, which existed 48 years from 1946 to 1993, which in a way has done quite well in the cold war of the fifties to the eighties, and one from east Berlin, the co called “Deutschland-Sender Kultur”, which has had a short existence right after 1989 to 1993.

---

1 Transmediale, 3.2.2004
and originally contained the unencumbered parts of the radio stations of
the ddr regime, as there where “Stimme der DDR”, “Radio DDR” or “DT
64”. So this particular radio station I’m working for might be a very inter-
esting one, because some real “class enemies” of yesterday seemed to
were brought together nine years ago to work together for a new radio
future. In part that is the case, but in other parts, as always, life or real
life is far more complex than some big words will tell you.

In fact there is no special claim written on the door or spoken into the air
of our program, but the facts are, that DeutschlandRadio Berlin is more
culturally orientated in its program that the one in cologne is, where po-
itical issues are much more dominant, but again, with “culturally orien-
tated”, or in german “das Kulturprogramm” we have to face another un-
translatable word. The word “culture” is always meant to be a very ger-
man keyword for all the things a society wants to point to as being very
precious, very prized, very valuable, very worthwhile, in the fields of art,
literature, film, theater, opera, classical music, world music as well as
jazz, education, natural and human science, and politics as well. Last
not least we do many work on radio plays and artistically produced fea-
tures, we produce more the 40 original radio plays the whole year
round, another 60 or 70 features perennial, and broadcast them togeth-
er with some 250 other productions coming out of other public stations
in Germany, Austria or Switzerland. So our program even at daytimes
broadcasts kind of 9 hours of pure “cultural” issues, live talks and some
interactive pays included, a daily child program as well. Only the early
morning hours in the week are reserved for more political matters, after
eight pm we only have one other political information half an hour, and
all the rest is, you may call it “culture”. A classical life concert opens the
evening almost every day at eight o clock, fine transmissions included
coming life from the Met in New York for example, where last week Mr.
Placido Domingo misses the stage for almost half an hour, and you can
hear the swooning voice of the announcer of the other end.
So, as you can see, the kind of radio I am working for includes very traditional parts of radio history and some modern parts as well, for example a net based interactive radio play we did some years ago called “beianruf soap”, and a weekly sonic arts program on midnight as well and much more other things I cannot go into details to right now. Let me point out finally, that this type of program I am working for, generally spoken, is of course in the danger to become unaffordable for other radio stations like the ones in the counties of Germany, because it is done for listeners who really want to listen and have time to listen and not just want to hear the noise of the alike and of the same, which on the other hand listeners have the right to do so in a media society where attention has become the rarest commodity.