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WUIS launches 'alternative' digital station

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WUIS/Illinois Public Radio has launched a new "alternative" digital radio station, which is part of a nearly \$300,000 upgrade.

The station, called "Xponential Radio," first arrived on the airwaves in mid-October and can be received using an HD radio or listening online at www.wuis.org, according to Bill Wheelhouse, WUIS general manager.

The new station's playlist features music from artists such as David Bowie, Lyle Lovett and Elvis Costello.

The primary WUIS (HD-1) channel will continue to carry NPR programming, classical music and local news.

WUIS also hopes to offer a third digital channel at its position on the FM digital dial, 91.9, within the next couple of years, Wheelhouse said.

"It would allow us to use the newer digital technology to offer more services," he said. "We have to hope that people will eventually pick up these radios."

Wheelhouse said digital radios would have to take off more with the general public before the station considers creating a third channel, which might be used predominately for news.

"There has to be more (market) penetration before we make one channel all news," he said.

WUIS is the first radio station in Springfield to launch a secondary station designed for digital radio, according to a press release.

Wheelhouse said dozens of new digital radio stations are already being started in larger markets such as St. Louis and Chicago.

A federal grant paid for \$137,000 in new equipment for the station. The rest of the money for the upgrades has come from listener donations and a loan taken out by the station.

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