

## Bad luck, funding issues shutter Indie station WOXY.com

By [Jacqui Cheng](#) | Last updated about 3 hours ago

[WOXY.com](#), the hugely popular independent radio station that has been known for showcasing new and notable musicians, is being shut down by its current ownership. The station's website began displaying a message on Tuesday telling listeners that "current economic realities" have forced the station to stop its live broadcasts, though not everyone on the staff feels the same way about the situation.

WOXY, originally based out of Cincinnati, has been around in some incarnation or another for decades, though it has gained a reputation in recent years as a "zombie" radio station. The station has always had some issues with funding and has gone on- and offline several times in its long history. After eventually going online-only in 2004, the site still struggled to make ends meet with fundraising efforts, advertising, and investors, and was eventually purchased by the (now Apple-owned) Lala in 2006. Then, in 2009, Lala sold the still-money-bleeding WOXY to Future Sounds, Inc., which eventually moved the whole staff to Austin, Texas.

According to WOXY General Manager Bryan Jay Miller, there were numerous elements that pushed WOXY over the edge this time around. In an e-mail to Ars, Miller said that the station had a "bit of bad luck" resulting in some major advertising deals falling through over the last 12 months.

In addition to having to pay music royalties—an issue for all Internet broadcasters to [some degree or another](#)—he said that the station got dealt a bad hand in today's market. "We had been working on an plan to get WOXY to profitability (advertising, sponsorships, video syndication) and the money ran out before we could get there unfortunately," Miller told Ars. "The problem has always been making it work on the back end. Ad-supported Internet radio is difficult proposition these days, even more so when you buck the trend of computer-programmed radio and actually have live DJs craft the playlists."

That's not the only perspective on this situation, though. Matt Shiverdecker, also known as "Shiv," painted the picture of a seemingly progressive, music-loving company that misled the staff into working hard all the way up through this year's SXSW festival (which ended last week) before pulling the rug out from under them. In a [Facebook posting](#), Shiv said the 2010 SXSW was the station's most successful ever, but that deals fell through and suddenly the whole station is being shut down without any goodbyes. If it helps to understand Shiv's feelings on the topic, he used the phrase "kick in the dick" twice.

Another original WOXY staffer, Joe Long, wrote on his [blog](#) about the situation. "Nobody is holding their breath that WOXY will be back, but none of us can close the door completely just yet either," Long said. Marketing director Paige Maguire also wrote on her [blog](#) that Future Sounds had "exhausted [its] resources" looking for more funding. "As much as I wish something magical might come through, it really doesn't look likely at this point," she wrote.

### Reaction from the community

Needless to say, the future doesn't look bright for WOXY making a grand comeback once again. In our [own forums](#), readers have already begun to mourn the loss of WOXY, and the numerous musicians who have been showcased by the station have been unsurprisingly shocked by the news. "We knew [the WOXY staff] really well," said Panda Riot bassist (and my brother) Justin Cheng. "WOXY was kind of one-of-a-kind, as far as a radio station goes. I really liked listening to their live 'on air' shows. The bands and the sound quality of the recordings were just good."

Eric Larson from a band called Ume shared the sentiment. "I'm not sure what happened, but I think it is really sad. Radio is a tough business, so in some senses it doesn't surprise me that a radio station was having trouble. But, that said, WOXY really seemed to be making an effort to do something different and change the format," Larson told Ars. "No matter what happened, I think it is pretty terrible things have shut down. I really hope someone does come along and save the station, not so much because we need more radio stations, but rather because we need innovation in this space."

Another guitarist and singer for a band called Hollywood Lies, Matthew David Barletta, told Ars that he thinks the situation was basically inevitable. "The reality of the situation is that with the advent of the portable MP3 player, individuals can now load their credit-card sized devices with weeks worth of music that they enjoy, commercial free," Barletta said. "While I do applaud WOXY for sticking true to their morals, truthfully radio is on the decline."

There are some alternatives for indie music fans. [CHIRP](#) is a promising option, especially for those who live in Chicago and participate in the community that meets up at shows. Some have also recommended [XPoNential Radio](#) from Philadelphia. For now, however, those who loved WOXY will be left with a hole in their hearts, hoping that some miracle will bring funding back to their favorite indie station.