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WOXY.com shutting down

BY LAUREN BISHOP • LBISHOP@ENQUIRER.COM • MARCH 23, 2010

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Six months after moving from Cincinnati to Austin, Internet radio station WOXY.com abruptly stopped broadcasting Tuesday morning after its Los Angeles-based owner, Future Sounds, pulled the plug.

The move stunned station staff and listeners, who have endured multiple shutdowns, resurrections and changes of ownership since the station stopped broadcasting at 97.7 FM in 2004.

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"It is absolutely mind-boggling to me that I have to sit down and write these words: WOXY.com is being shut down today by our owners at Future Sounds," DJ Matt Shiverdecker wrote to listeners on the station's [online message board](#).

He wrote that he and three other Cincinnati-based staffers uprooted their lives to move to Austin, believing they were finally under ownership that would take the station to the next level. They continued working during last week's South by Southwest music festival in Austin because they thought a deal was in motion to continue funding the station. They were told on Monday that the deal fell through.

"There will be no farewell shows or weepy goodbyes," he wrote. "Our listeners deserve more than this, but I don't think any of us on staff have it to give right now."

A message on [WOXY.com's home page](#) Tuesday morning read: "Due to current economic realities and the lack of ongoing funding for WOXY's operations, we've been forced to suspend our live broadcasts as of March 23rd. We're continuing to explore options to keep The Future of Rock and Roll alive."

John Mascarenhas, a partner in Future Sounds, a management and record company, said the company took the station off the air because multiple sponsorship deals with major corporations fell through because of internal politics at those corporations. He also said that fundraising at Future Sounds, a management and record company, has taken longer than expected.

He said WOXY's independent music format can be a tough sell to corporations whose decision-makers are more familiar with mainstream, chart-topping acts than under-the-radar, up-and-coming ones.

"WOXY's ahead of the curve and always has been, sometimes to its own detriment," he said.

But Mascarenhas said he wants to bring the station back to life, whether that means Future Sounds retains ownership with the help of sponsors or investors or sells the station to another company that has a long-term plan to keep it afloat.

"There are a lot of people circulating right now," he said. "But no one has written a check, and we



Enquirer file
 WOXY.com DJ and blog editor Joe Long (left), music director and DJ Matt Shiverdecker (middle) and general manager Bryan Miller posed in their studio in July of 2009 before their web-based radio station moved to Au-

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need to be able to pay people.”

Estimates of WOXY’s annual operating expenses start at \$500,000.

WOXY general manager Bryan Jay Miller, who is now based in San Francisco, said he and other staffers would examine any future ownership deals carefully.

“Unless we felt really good about the situation, I don’t think any of us want to repeat this again,” he said. “I think we would rather just let it go than jump into bed with someone that might not be ideal.”

WOXY.com was receiving about 100,000 unique visitors monthly, Miller said. In February, fans logged about 465,000 hours listening to the station through its Web site, iTunes and an iPhone application.

WOXY also had a partnership with **WVXU-FM** that enabled people to listen to the station through HD radios on WVXU HD2, but WOXY also has removed its stream there.

WVXU will replace WOXY with an adult alternative music service from Philadelphia’s WXPB called **XPoNential Radio**, Richard Eiswerth, president and general manager of Cincinnati Public Radio, announced Tuesday.

“We believe XPoNential Radio is a worthy successor to the void left by WOXY.com,” Eiswerth said.

XPoNential Radio will begin airing on WVXU HD2 Monday. Until then, WOXY.com will continue to stream its Vintage WOXY archive, Eiswerth said.

A former Top 40 radio station, WOXY became a pioneer of the modern rock radio format in 1983 when entrepreneurs Doug and Linda Balogh purchased it and branded it 97X. Dustin Hoffman famously repeated its tagline, “97X – BAM! – The Future of Rock and Roll,” in 1988’s “Rain Man.”

After the Baloghs sold WOXY’s broadcast license in 2004, the station became one of the first terrestrial radio stations in the country go online-only with the help of two anonymous investors.

When revenue shortfalls temporarily silenced the Internet broadcast in 2006, Palo Alto, Calif.-based music streaming company Lala.com stepped in to purchase it. Future Sounds bought WOXY from Lala in January 2009.

Under Future Sounds’ ownership, WOXY moved from downtown Cincinnati’s Longworth Hall to Austin in September to expand its specialty programming and its Lounge Act live in-studio performances. WOXY staff had traveled to Austin every March for the past three years to broadcast live Lounge Act sessions with bands playing at South by Southwest.

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