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JUST FOR PROGRAMMERS

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It's Different Here

It's a statement as old as the earliest commercial radio broadcasts: every Program Director ever has at least once uttered the phrase "this market is different." And there is a lot of truth to that statement. Most cities have unique characteristics and heritage that make them stand out from other towns just a few hundred miles away. Tapping into those market-specific characteristics has always been, and continues to be, a big part of what makes radio stand out as a great local medium.

That idea is reinforced in Nielsen's latest [Audio Today report](#) which focuses on African American & Hispanic audiences. The report is full of useful facts about how these two distinctive groups consume radio but there is one section called "Radio's Local Flavor" that compares listening patterns in markets of different sizes and the results show just how cities really do differ.

The study compares Los Angeles' 4.6 million Hispanic radio users to Denver's 477,000 and there are some similarities. In Los Angeles 97% of all Hispanics listen to radio while Denver comes in at 94.9% and the gender splits in both markets hover around 53% male to 47% female.

But the differences are notable. In Los Angeles Spanish-language music formats account for the largest share of Hispanic listening at 38.5%, while in Denver general market music formats lead the way with 37.3% of Hispanic listening in that market. Elsewhere, in Denver the top-rated daypart is middays while in Los Angeles afternoon drive tops the ranker.

The African American comparison is even more distinct. Looking at Washing D.C.'s 1.1 million radio users compared to Jacksonville, FL's 288,000 again the overall reach is similar: 93.5% to 91.7% but this time even the gender split is different; 48% male in Washington compared to 53% in Jacksonville. Urban formats dominate in Jacksonville making up 67.3% of all African-American listening compared to just 60.7% in the nation's capital. And, probably due to the heavy influence of politics in D.C., spoken word programming grabs over 16% of all African-American listening while in Jacksonville it accounts for just under 5%.

Sure there's a chicken-and-egg argument to be made here: are the differences driven by available media options in these markets or are the media options driven by differences in the listener base? There's no way to be sure but, thinking back to what every PD in the history of radio has known inherently, we're willing to lean towards the idea that each market is truly unique and tailoring your efforts to those specific nuances can play a large role in helping your station achieve ratings success.

Read the full *Audio Today* report [by clicking here](#).