

Subcity Live At The Freshers' Fair – Best Live Event/Outside Broadcast (Subcity Radio)

The Freshers' Fair is one of the most important dates in the calendar of any student association and the student media groups are no exception. If approached successfully it can regenerate your organisation with new and enthusiastic talent for the rest of the year. From the Freshers' perspective, it provides an invaluable insight into the extra-curricular life of the university and helps them to settle into on-campus life.

Our aims in covering this event were therefore twofold. On the one hand, by setting up an OB from the event we marked ourselves out amongst the other student groups and attracted a lot of attention from students. This benefited us enormously in that it encouraged new students to find out more about the station and hopefully get involved in some way. We also saw ourselves as providing a service to both the students at the fair and those listening at home. We had two stationary presenters next to the compact 10 desk on microphones that were providing general commentary on the fair. We also had a roving reporter that was moving through the crowd and speaking to students about the fair and their first experiences of university life. We therefore provided a means for students to get directly involved with the station's output and share their stories. It meant that those listening at home or elsewhere on campus were not only given information about the fair and the stalls present, but got to hear about other people's experiences which might help them adjust to the transition into university life and feel like they were not alone. The information we were providing about the fair itself would also be a useful preview for those people who were planning to attend the event the following day.



Technically, the broadcast was run as a small temporary studio on site feeding into the main studio as an outside source. This allowed for a smooth handover to and from the OB. In a corner of the fair overlooking the event we set up two presenter mics and a separately manned engineering position, controlling the output and three separate monitor mixes. The roving reporter was equipped with a radio mic and a wireless in-ear monitoring system, with a range covering the whole event. They were fed a clean feed of the broadcast, allowing two-ways with the main presenters, and could also receive talkback to allow coordination between links. Music was provided by a direct feed from turntables that were being manned by one of the station's DJs throughout the afternoon.

The output from all this was fed back to the main studio via tie lines and some creative cabling solutions. The majority of the distance between the two sites was covered using the remnants of a video broadcast system installed by (the now defunct) British Relay in the sixties and sold to the university for £1 in 1985. Knowledge and documentation of the network is sparse, but a high-fidelity linkup was achieved using a mixture of hearsay, trial and error.

The OB was highly successful and achieved our key aims of both engaging students directly with the station's output and providing them with important information about the event. The commentary from all three of our presenters, and the participating students, was both entertaining and managed to capture the essence of the event. It was simultaneously incredibly rewarding and challenging to deal with the unpredictability of a live OB of this kind.