

STUDENT LIFE

Do you plan on seeing the film *Brokeback Mountain*?

"I am. I think it will be a good movie."
Katie Sweeny



"No, it just doesn't interest me."
Paul Carmichael



"I have no desire to see it. I'm too busy."
Tiffany Mitchell



"I might check it out when it comes on video. I don't know -- sounds like an interesting movie."
Giovanni Reimer



"No, I don't like gay cowboy movies."
Brenton Kemp

Do you have any story ideas or suggestions for question of the week?

Feel free to e-mail them to us: SLeditor@psu.edu.

Nickelodeon Studios closes

By Patrick Webster
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Nickelodeon Studios, home to the network and television shows that defined the childhood of many current college-age students, was closed down and destroyed in 2005.

After being left to languish in disrepair by parent company MTV networks, the building was closed down in April of 2005. The infamous Slime Geyser was razed to the ground and removed in May.

As of December, the property had been repossessed by Universal Studios and the building is in the process of being converted to more offices and usable space. These moves have been made with minimum publicity and have mostly flown in under the radar of the general public. Most people and Penn State students react with surprise upon hearing the news.

"You're kidding. It saddens me to see such a huge part of my youth being removed by the bane of my high school years [MTV]," said Penn State student Zach Tylwalk, who was taken aback by the news. "It's news to me."

Executives from MTV Networks declined to comment regarding policies leading up to its closing.

As the premier recording facility for the Nickelodeon channel, the studios produced many highly popular television programs, including "Clarissa Explains it All," the "Double Dare" series, "Wild & Crazy Kids," "GUTS," "Legends of the Hidden Temple," "Eureka's Castle," and many more. In the end, over 2,000 live-action situational comedies and game shows were taped in the studios.

The fan website nickelodeonstudios.net interviewed an employee that preferred to remain unidentified. "I was recently there, and the Nick building is all but abandoned for now. Obviously they're going to phase out any sort of merchandise that had to do with the studios, but most of it was gone anyway, and yeah I'm pretty sure that the building will just be converted to offices. The time capsule was still there, if that's any consolation."

The studios, which until recently hosted guided tours and opened the taping of several shows to live audiences, are best known as a Mecca for kids and for people in their late teens and early twenties across America. The popularity and marketability of the product produced by Nickelodeon Studios made it a common and inseparable part of modern American culture. There are very few people who have not seen a show that it produced at some time in their lives. Events such as the Kids Choice Awards and annual New Years specials garnered high viewership ratings and critical acclaim, as well as the numerous educational and news programs that helped keep a generation of children informed of the world around them and entertained with clean (or slimy) fun.

While most of the live action production capability has been eliminated, many of the current cartoon shows, such as "Spongebob Squarepants" and "Fairly Oddparents," will still be able to be produced at the West Coast Nickelodeon production facility in California. In the end, the move will likely be regarded as the end of an era by millions of children and children at heart across the country.



NICKELODEONSTUDIOS.NET/CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Nickelodeon Studios was heartily dedicated to television programming geared toward children and young adults.

Listening Legally

By Logan Stack
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Dear ASCII,

I don't run Windows, so I can't use the Penn State Napster service. Is there any alternative free source of music (besides pirating it)?

-Macie

Dear Macie,

Absolutely! There are many Internet radio stations out there, and most of them are free. Shoutcast.com has a nearly comprehensive list of them.

You're more likely to find esoteric music on these Internet radio stations than on the radio in your car. You're bound to find something you'll like; there were 13,170 stations as of this writing. And every time I checked back, the count had gone up by a few stations. Over the couple of hours I spent writing this, the number of stations listed at shoutcast.com increased by more than XM radio's total of 160 stations.

Shoutcast is a protocol for broadcasting music online. It was developed by Nullsoft, the same people who make Winamp. The audio can actually be in many formats but is almost always encoded as an MP3.

Any good media player can tune in to these stations. Linux's XMMS, Mac's iTunes and Winamp for Windows all work well. If you don't like that music player, the VLC Media Player is a nice alternative for any operating system.

Your computer is receiving this music from the Internet, but none of those players will let you save the audio - only the file pointing to the station. To save the music, you need a different program. I use Streamripper. It was originally made for Linux, but there are now versions of it available for Windows and Macintosh too. It connects to the stream and saves the music as MP3s. It creates a new MP3 file every time the title of the song in the stream switches. Most stations are nice enough to label their commercials, so you can

delete them afterwards by just dragging "commercial.mp3" to the trash - no audio editing involved. What you save is a bunch of individually labeled songs, not just a continuous stream of music. It's nothing like recording a cassette off of FM radio. Streamripper can be set to re-broadcast the stream to your computer, so that you can listen in while it rips MP3s without using up all the extra bandwidth of connecting to the server twice.

Legally speaking, recording off of these Internet broadcasts should work just like recording off of TV using your VCR. It's legal to record it and watch later, but you can't sell it or redistribute it (like on Kazaa) or anything else you couldn't do with a recorded episode of South Park. You don't own the copyright, so your rights are pretty limited.

Unfortunately, the people broadcasting must have a good enough Internet connection to let lots of people listen (sometimes tens of thousands of people at once!), so many of the stations have commercials to support the cost of that connection. Most of the stations I've listened to don't have them or have only one commercial every ten or fifteen minutes. It's nowhere near as annoying as traditional radio.

Keep in mind that you're using bandwidth too. The higher the bitrate of the station, the better the audio quality and the more bandwidth it will take up. You only get 1.5 gigabits per week in the dorms, so any station over 20 KBps will give you a bandwidth violation if you leave it on 24/7. You can check how much bandwidth you've used at Rescom's web site; it updates three times a day.

Do you have a computer question? Then ask ASCII! Send an e-mail to ASCII@psu.edu and you may see your question answered in next week's column.

Write for the Behrend
Beacon!

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