

Computalk

Tom King's CompuTalk was among the first syndicated computer talk radio shows on mainstream commercial radio in North America. Debuting in 1994, CompuTalk was also one of the first computer radio shows to stream live content on the Internet, was the first radio show selected for broadcast on MSN. The final broadcast was December 30, 2000.

Show

Tom King's CompuTalk was created and hosted by technology industry analyst Tom King. The show's promise to its listeners was best summed up by the tagline "The World's Source for Geek-Free Computer Radio," and signified further by the unique call-in number, 1-800-NO-GEEKS. The show was popular among Saturday morning AM radio listeners in numerous states.

The show and its host were vehement in guarding the "no geeks" policy, which referred to any caller who asked questions that were too technical. These would be "flushed" off the air by host Tom King, who gleefully disconnected them with an accompanying toilet-flush sound effect.

References to the show were made in a comparison of computer-oriented talk radio and television programs in industry publication Computer User (www.computeruser.com), August 18, 1998. The article was not favorable to the show, stating:

The problem is the show runs a whopping five hours, and when you have that much time to fill, you have to be, um, inventive. King's solution is to let each segment run way too long.

However, many publications, and the listeners themselves, seemed to disagree, as the show consistently rated highly for its Saturday morning timeslot.

Guests

Guests included Michael Dell, Mark Cuban, George W. Bush, Tom Clancy, Seka, Donna Rice Hughes and David Coursey. Gil Amelio who chose CompuTalk as his first interview outlet after being fired by Apple and replaced by Steve Jobs.

Industry Influence

Though the show broadcast only in weekly installments, it quickly became influential in the technology industry. The no-nonsense, no-geeks approach made the show accessible to a wider audience, and thus more appealing as a platform for marketing within the industry. Companies such as Symantec, makers of the Norton Antivirus products, approached host Tom King to provide a celebrity endorsement for their print advertising, featured in PC Magazine and other national publications.

CompuTalk became the official kick-off event for the then-influential Comdex tradeshow (now Interop) in Las Vegas. The show broadcast each year from the Stratosphere Tower Hotel & Casino studios on the 108th floor at the north end of The Strip.

The web site incorporated a then-new web technology called Shockwave Flash and was featured by Macromedia as a "Web Site of the Week" in December, 1997.

Host

Tom King graduated from Texas A&M University with a degree in marketing in 1986. After working under Mark Cuban in sales for his MicroSolutions venture, Tom earned a J.D. in law from Boston University School of Law in 1992. While serving as an assistant district attorney for the Galveston County District Attorney's Office, he was a leading user of computer technology in the courtroom, where he was undefeated in jury trials.

In 1994, Tom made the decision to leave his position with the DA's office, and began broadcasting in March, 1994, on KPRC 950 AM in Houston. Syndication began January of 2005.

Tom served as a contributor for Computer Currents magazine, computer expert for CBS affiliate KHOU-TV in Houston, and was a finalist judge for the Webby Awards in their initial years of existence. Tom is also mentioned in the credits of novel.