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*Kinderprogramm -  
an investigation into childrens' radio*

*Cameron Stevens*

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## Acknowledgments

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## About the author

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Cameron Stevens was awarded the Australian-German Association Educational Development Fellowship in 2006. In late 2006 and early 2007, he conducted a research project on the German model of radio content for children. He holds a masters degree in teaching from the University of Sydney and a bachelor of arts, majoring in media/cinema, from LaTrobe University, Melbourne. Cameron currently holds the position of Senior Educator: Programs Coordinator at Lab.3000 RMIT innovation in digital design and will commence his new role as Education Manager of Federation Square in Melbourne in July 2007.

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# Introduction

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Bread and Meat – My journey through Döner Kebab entrepreneurship, anarchist speakeasies and a fully-fledged grammatical free-fall.

When I won the Educational Developmental Fellowship in May 2006, awarded by the Australian German Association and the Goethe Institute to only one candidate, it was a dream come true for me.

The luxury to research and study full-time does not come easily after one has been in the workforce for some time, and since I had started studying German at Melbourne's Goethe Institute about a year prior to the award, coming to the classes was one of my favourite times of the week.

In September 2006, I was on my way to make the most of the 8-week German course, a return flight, accommodation and the travel stipend included

in the scholarship. My research component, which focused on Germany's diverse offerings of children's radio (with a view to bring some of this culture to Australia, where radio shows for youngsters are largely unheard of) would see me visit radio stations in Berlin and around Germany. I was intent on making as many connections as possible, conduct interviews, gather information and produce shows during my stay. Still in Australia, I had organised my accommodation via one of the many Internet forums where share house holds find housemates. I was to stay with Thomas, a radio journalist, and Claudia, a student, in the trendy area of Prenzlauer Berg. The company of a dog, they wrote, was also included (a first hint at the dog population in Berlin – the word 'Berlin Slalom', describing the fashion in which Berliner's dodge the droppings of

their beloved pets on the footpath, was soon to enter my vocabulary).

I can attest that the name of my Goethe Institute course, Intensive 8, was utterly appropriate. More than four hours class time where followed by three hours of homework every night, five days a week. It was difficult but, thanks to the enthusiasm of our teacher Michael, the most brain straining grammar was fun (most of the time). While whatever brainpower could be mustered was focused laser-like on the lessons of the day, the evening 'debriefing' gatherings in Berlin's bars would become progressively and decidedly freeform.

In a motley group comprising a Venezuelan journalist, a Japanese artist, a Russian opera singer, an American professor and a scientist from Ghana, we developed

strange hybrid languages in our transition to German conversation.

Those rewarding, fun memorable times flew by as is the way of these things and in eight short weeks I was left to fend for myself in the real world of full-speed adult German conversation.

In the beginning I was like a deer in the headlights whenever I was spoken to. I've now graduated to a merely unfortunate blank stare as my brain struggles to quickly comprehend incoming information before the conversation leaves me behind. Lesson one: the conversation never waits. Children on the other hand do wait and for this reason and others they are great to practise speaking with. My young language partner, Carl, is the two year old son of a couple of my grown up friends in Berlin and while they share coffee and job-hunting

war stories, Carl and I muse on themes such as 'dogs' or 'trucks'.

Naturally, a great deal of my time in Berlin and Germany was spent working on my project, which entailed making contact with media organisations, institutions and professionals. In the moments of initial contact the Goethe name was invaluable in opening doors. It was as if for the duration of my stay I had a golden key.

A great challenge for me was to make appointments by telephone in German, which I had to do often. I enjoyed doing this and it was one of my first significant German language successes. I found the best technique was to block one's free ear while simultaneously squeezing the eyes shut thus leading to an appearance of exaggerated concentration. This pose really seemed to help and I needed all the help I could

get so I didn't pay too much mind to the funny looks from colleagues.

In my last week in Germany I returned to Berlin to say good-bye to friends and to finish a radio report that I had been making about the mighty, ubiquitous Berlin Döner Kebab.

While editing my program in a community radio studio in the Berlin suburb of Wedding, my final wish came true when I looked outside to see the street outside covered by falling snow.

I arrived back in Australia on 2 February and soaked up the last of the long 30-degree days. I look back on the fellowship as an experience and opportunity of a lifetime both in terms of my professional goals as well as on a personal basis.

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## Overview

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### 2.1 Description of project

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*Kinderprogramm* was an investigation into German children's radio programming. I undertook this project with a view to use the German model to establish a multicultural children's radio program in Australia

This research project investigated radio programmes for children, namely educational programmes that feature conventional journalistic genres such as reportage, documentary, feature and talk back to provide information, entertainment and news for children aged 4-13.

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### 2.2 Rationale

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Currently, no dedicated radio program is available to Australian children. The youth arm of the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC), Triple J FM, does a very successful job in engaging the 14 to 25 age group. For children below the age of 14 however, there exists virtually no free to air radio content designed specifically for them. Regardless of this fact there is nonetheless no shortage of other types media available for children. Magazines, books, television, CDs, DVDs, computer games as well as emerging technologies such as mobile phones, iPods and of course, the Internet including online gaming, chat rooms, MySpace, iTunes, YouTube, Podcasting and aimless surfing (the web) all compete for the limited attention of children.

The aim of *Kinderprogramm* was to examine realistic possibilities for an alternative radio platform that is engaging to children, that stimulates their imaginations and aims to lengthen and hone concentration skills, respect their intelligence and build knowledge on a range of issues.

The diverse German-media scape is home to a long standing culture of children's broadcasting. This often involves entire specialist teams (Redaktionen) into the production of children's programming. Most of these programs are not dependent on advertising as they exist on state-run radio stations. Further to this, Berlin is host to two independent children's radio stations: Radijojo, a community station and Radio Teddy, a commercial radio station based in Potsdam.

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## Overview

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### 2.3 Aims in undertaking this research

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Through my research, I aimed to get an insight into the workings of child-oriented radio productions that would provide me with the knowledge and confidence to put together my proposal for a children's radio show in Australia; the skills I was interested in ranged from coming up with the name and mascot of the show to determining its organisational processes and formats. I also hoped to share my insights with other practitioners in Australia who are interested in developing new media formats for children.

Like its role models in German broadcasting, the goal of the children's radio project I envisaged was to provide information in an entertaining format. It also aims to provide children an opportunity to participate both as listeners and as active

on-air participants. I would like to bring closer the world around them by presenting information in such a way that it is relevant to them, as well as their parents, teachers and in fact anyone who listens. After all, why should children's programs only be interesting to children? Through research, I knew that some German programs, such as Kakadu, work on the principle that both adults and young people can enjoy children's radio.

My research trip to Germany has provided a valuable platform from which to initiate long-term relationships with children's media producers.

I believe that both Germany and Australia share similar challenges in children's broadcasting, for instance their approach to multiculturalism.

Through this exchange, it has been possible to open a dialogue with the producers I have met as to our shared

ideas and values, and I hope that these dialogues find a way into children's radio shows further down the track.

This could be achieved through shared content, exchange in radio features or — thanks to new technologies — joint webcasts or reports, for instance a school class in Germany might be interested in putting together a programme about their customs, their hobbies or their pets for a class in Australia - and vice versa.

Ongoing projects of this nature have already begun between myself and German children's radio stations and have been made possible through the relationships built between myself the makers of radio shows during my visit. As such, this exchange is working to foster cross-cultural relationships as well as a recognition and dialogue of shared issues, problems, values or even differences - both for the listeners of children's programs as well as for their makers.

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### 2.4 Methodology

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For time frames ranging from one day to four weeks, I visited a number of broadcasters and children's programmes in Germany and talked to producers, hosts, sound recordists, administrators, educators, children involved in radio projects and built relationships that may be helpful in achieving my goal to develop a concept for my own children's radio show, or — due to the many new insights derived through this research — other forms of children's media content.

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### 2.5 Radio stations visited

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I spent my eight-week term of studies in Berlin. While there, I completed two internships at children's radio stations. The first, for four weeks, at Radijojo, a community-funded station; the second, for two weeks, at one of the most prestigious children's radio programmes, Kakadu produced by Deutschlandradio Kultur.

I conducted three further research visits throughout my travels, where I spent one day talking to producers and presenters. The first visit was to the makers of the children's programme Domino, produced by Hessischer Rundfunk in Frankfurt. The second one was to the show Liliputz, produced by Westdeutscher Rundfunk in Cologne.

My third visit also led me to visit children's television program Logo (KiKa, ZDF & ARD), which aims to educate children about topical current events in world and local news. Further, I contacted and visited cultural and arts institutions to investigate their children and youth programming, among them the multimedia arts institution ZKM and the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin.

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## Internship #1: Radijojo - The Community Station

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Radijojo is a non-profit and non-commercial children's radio station based in Wedding, Berlin. Radijojo develops and broadcasts radio programs for children between the ages of 3 and 13.

Through its educational programs, Radijojo strongly emphasises the participation of children in the radio production process.

The makers of Radijojo believe that by engaging children in radio content that is especially designed for them, their imagination skills are fostered and their concentration skills honed. Program topics favoured by Radijojo are; early music education, international understanding, environmental-, political-, justice and health education, cultural integration, languages, violence prevention, ethics, fairy tales and stories.



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# Internship #1 - Radijojo

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## 3.1 Time frame

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I worked at Radijojo for four weeks. My initial two-week stay commenced in the first week of November 2006. After this term, I returned again to Radijojo to complete another week towards the end of December. I then completed my fourth week in late January 2007.

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## 3.2 Facts & Frequency

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Radijojo was formed in August 2003 by Thomas Röhlinger who holds an MBA in Sociology and Journalism. Röhlinger recognised the potential for a radio station for children not least through his son, as he found he always had to turn off the radio when his son was in the room, as there 'just wasn't anything for him around.'

Although the station started in a squat in Berlin Mitte, the offices and studio are located in the Haus der Jugend in Wedding. Radijojo employs 40 people, many of whom are volunteers or who are financed by state projects. Radijojo is based on a non-profit community organisational business structure.

Currently, Radijojo does not broadcast over the radio. The station is not in a position to finance its own frequency. The Radijojo material can be heard via the Internet at any time on [www.radijojo.de](http://www.radijojo.de)

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## 3.3 Finance

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As a non-profit organisation, Radijojo deliberately distances itself from commercial radio stations. According to founder Thomas Röhlinger, he does not want to turn a children's radio station into a 'Trojan Horse' of the advertising industry. Instead, the station is financed through endowments, public project resources, royalties as well as contributions and revenues acquired through radio courses.

Around 40 sponsors inject much-needed capital into the station, among them are non-governmental organisations like Aktion Mensch, the Deutsche Kinderhilfswerk and Stiftung Lesen but also commercial sponsors like Daimler Chrysler and a juice company.

The patron of the station is Daniel Barenboim, the director of the Staatsoper Berlin, who is an internationally renowned pianist and conductor.

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## 3.4 Radijojo Projects & Programs

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Around 50 per cent of the content of Radijojo is the spoken word. The focus is largely educational, focusing both on the world of children and featuring children making a foray into the world of adults. Children find out, for instance, what children in Cologne like about their city, how the children in Wedding deal with arguments, where the hiccup comes from or they can listen to an interview with politicians, such as former Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, who revealed that he wanted to become a postman as a child.

An important 'building block' of the programme is the project "Radijojo in Schulen", which teaches children how to make radio and at the same time serves as a source of income for the radio stations. This programme gives children at Berlin schools the opportunity to get to know the process of developing a radio show and develop content.

This ranges from coming up with ideas to recording and moderating the show.

Other structural parts of the program include pedagogical shows produced with the support of particular organisations.

The following are a few examples:

### Grass Lion Radio

This program presents mysteries and suspense stories on environmental issues for children from the age of seven to ten years old. This project is supported by Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt (DBU), Osnabrück.

### Can You Believe This!?!

This is a natural sciences program for children. This series is supported by the Robert Bosch Stiftung.

### Radijojo! at School

This initiative provides children with the opportunity to develop their own radio

show from development to final broadcast. This series is supported by LISUM, Landesinstitut für Schule und Medien and Quartiersmanagement.

### Children in East & West children discover Germany

In this series, children from different regions in Germany introduce their hometowns, interview contemporary witnesses of the Berlin Wall and write their own stories about the East and West. This series is funded by Kulturstiftung des Bundes.

# Internship #1 - Radijojo

## 3.5 Employment Structure

Radijojo has been able to expand to 40 employees by positioning itself as a place of training for the unemployed. Unemployed people have the opportunity to apply for government-sponsored positions of up to one year within the organisation. Of Radijojo's few long-term employees, most initially began in this manner. Thomas was up front in explaining to me the pros and cons of this unusual staffing situation. He explained that the yearly rotation of unemployed staff was a double-edged sword. On the positive side sometimes employees with a high level of relevant skills came through which he could not otherwise afford to employ.

But in another sense, many other employees had difficulties in their lives and brought to work with them the complications and frustrations associated with long term unemployment. Thomas remarked that this situation often led to conflict between them and the management.

## 3.6 Collaboration

A key aim for Radijojo is to build up the 'World Children's Radio Network'. This project endeavours to enable children to listen to radio shows made by kids from around the world as well as distributing their own shows. Current languages represented are German, English and Spanish. Presently, Radijojo has built relationships with satellites for broadcast and collaboration on every continent except Australia. These satellites are all non-profit community focused radio stations that are willing to collaborate with Radijojo both in terms of broadcasting the material of Radijojo as well as sharing their own. My collaboration with Radijojo was viewed by its producers and myself as the first step in building a lasting radio-bridge between Germany and Australia.



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# Internship #1 - Radijojo

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## 3.7 The Experience

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I was involved in a number of projects at Radijojo. I began by making a half hour program about Australia including information about animals, sport, aboriginal culture, sayings and songs. This show is currently available on the Radijojo website.

I also visited three primary schools. The first was Vineta Grundschule in Wedding. Here, I observed the beginning of a project which would see three Radijojo employees guide a class of grade five children through play writing, researching, interviewing, technical issues and microphone technique. Once a week for six weeks, the Radijojo team would return until they had recorded and edited a range of material by all the children. This material could then be used as assessment, to be played on Radijojo and as a memento for

the children to keep. I visited two more primary schools while working with Radijojo. At the Charles Dickens International School, I recorded a version of Charles Dickens', A Christmas Carol read by the grade fives and sixes. At the Grimm Grundschule I made a report with the grade six children about Christmas and the cultural differences between Australia and Germany in celebrating this holiday.

Finally, I made a documentary inspired by the extraordinary proliferation of Kebab shops in Berlin. This was a very fun multicultural program to make as I began by interviewing everyone that I knew. I then taste-tested many Döner Kebabs and also interviewed experts such as the man known as the Döner King, Remzi Kaplan. The son of Anatolian immigrants, he runs a chain of Döner stores across

Berlin and exports Döner meat across Europe. His famous Public Relation campaigns on behalf of the Döner include the 'biggest Döner in the world, Miss Döner contests and the inception of 'Dönerstag'. I rounded off my story by travelling to Istanbul, the birth-place of the Döner Kebab, where I enjoyed the real thing first hand.

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## 3.8 Reflection

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In some respects, my experience with this organisation provided me with the most realistic preparation for the realities that I would later encounter in the initiation of my own children's radio show in Australia. Thomas Röhlinger founded Radijojo after attempting to secure full time employment with Deutsche Welle and Deutschlandradio, the two major government funded stations. (Based on anecdotal evidence from my visits to radio stations around Germany, this is a common story. The radio stations employ a small permanent running staff then utilise the vast available resource of contracted project based employees.) In my time at Radijojo, Thomas acted as a mentor to me and encouraged

me to work on or instigate a variety of projects. This hands-on experience was very rewarding and for this reason, I returned to Radijojo for an additional two weeks.

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## Internship #2: Deutschlandradio - The National Broadcaster

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Germany's nationally broadcast daily radio program for children already has a connection to Australia. Their mascot and namesake is the native Australian bird, the Kakadu.

The program models itself on the characteristics of this mascot. It is curious, adventurous and at times a little disrespectful, always searching for the answers to its questions. "If the Kakadu wants to know something, he explores until he finds the answer," write the program's makers on their website. The Kakadu represents the show as an emblem, but it is also a character that keeps reappearing in the show, often asking those questions or making those silly comments that the 'human' moderators don't dare to ask. The Kakadu content is modelled on the conventional genres of radio making; features, reportages and live-reportages, discussions and commentaries, talk back, quizzes and games, music shows and readings of stories and books. The listenership of Kakadu is not clearly defined, but judging by the response from talk back callers over the time of my stay, the average listeners are in their early primary school years and often listen with their parents. Like all other Deutschlandradio Kultur programs, no advertising is broadcast on Kakadu.



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# Internship #2 - Deutschlandradio

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## 4.1 Time frame

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My internship with Deutschlandradio Kultur was for two weeks, from mid-November until the beginning of December 2007.

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## 4.2 Facts & Frequency

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Kakadu was first aired shortly after the inception of Deutschlandradio Kultur in 1994. Although Deutschlandfunk (which is situated in Cologne) and Deutschlandradio Kultur evolved from predecessor radio stations, their beginnings signified the first national radio broadcaster in Germany. Looking at the broadcasting history of other European Nations, such as the UK and its 'Auntie' BBC and France with its tradition-riddled Radio France, this is considerably late. Kakadu is one of 12 regular segments of Deutschlandradio Kultur.

Aired on different FM frequencies across Germany (In Berlin on 89,6) Kakadu goes to air from 1:30 pm to 2:30 pm every weekday and on Saturday, and twice on Sunday, from 8 am to 9 am and 1:30 pm to 2:30pm.

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## 4.3 Finance

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Deutschlandradio Kultur is, like Deutschlandfunk, financed through the national broadcasting fees payable by every user of the media. The stations are legislated through a treaty between the 16 states of Germany. The two public broadcasters, ARD and ZDF, are also part of this body.

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## 4.4 Kakadu Projects & Programs

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The Kakadu calendar prescribes a different mode of broadcast for each day of the week, giving each day a particular characteristic.

Monday is 'Infotag' (info day), where children are informed about news and events around the world.

Tuesday is 'Erzähltag' (show-and-tell day), where moderators tell stories and fables.

Wednesday is 'Musiktag' (music day), which, as its name suggests, centres around music.

Thursday is 'Rauskriegttag' (find out day), where moderators and the Kakadu mascot find out everything the listeners want and care to know.

Friday is 'Quasseltag' (babble day), the kid's version of a talk back show, where young listeners are asked for their stories and opinions.

Saturday is 'Spieltag' (play day), offering games and quizzes for listeners to participate.

On Sunday, an early bird special keeps children entertained with reports and stories, while the later program features 'Hörspiele'. Additionally, the daily broadcasts often correspond to a theme taken from news and current affairs in the adult programs (i.e., mother's day or climate change can drive the theme of a show) or centre around a specific question (i.e. an entire show could centre around the idea of embarrassment, what it means to be embarrassed, why we get embarrassed and what happens when we do and children might be invited to talk about when they were last embarrassed).

All moderators take it in turns, with each of the five full-time staff taking on a full week of programs before retiring to research and preparation of their next turn.

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## Internship #2 - Deutschlandradio

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### 4.5 Employment Structure

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Within the field of children's radio broadcasting in Germany, there is no higher position than to be in the full-time employ of Kakadu. It is also an almost impossible position to attain. The official team of producers and presenters numbers five, supported by a vast team of casual contributors. Of this team of five, only two work for Kakadu full time. The other presenters either spend the rest of their working time in other areas of the institution or pursue other work outside Deutschlandradio.

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### 4.6 The Experience

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I entered Deutschlandradio at Hans-Rosenthal-Platz, Schöneberg, one cold, dark rainy day in mid-November 2006. The immense and stern building appeared befitting of its serious role as the national broadcaster. Once inside, Redakteurin Frau Claudia König-Suckel led me through the maze of long narrow corridors deep into the belly of the building to the offices of Kakadu in Treppenhaus F, 2. OG, Raum 208.

I was put under the charge of Redakteurin Frau Annette Winkler for the duration of my internship. After a short while we both realised that we weren't going to get very far if we continued to speak only German so thankfully Annette was happy to speak English much of the time.

While my time at Radijojo had been very hands-on, I was delegated to the role of the observer at Kakadu. Most of my time was spent listening carefully to archived episodes of Kakadu, then quizzing Annette on all aspects of their creation.

The program was of the highest broadcasting standard, therefore it was not surprising –but nevertheless immensely interesting – to meet Hans Cybinski, the Aufnahmeleiter of Deutschlandradio Kultur.

His job is to record, collect and catalogue sounds and his ear was finely tuned to the subtlest nuances of sound. During my meeting with him he played me sounds that he had collected from all around the world including from the rainforests and outback of Australia.

When asked what the most difficult sound to record was, he reported without hesitation that his most challenging moments are when he is required to recreate an atmosphere suggestive of the past. His reasoning was that it is very difficult to find a place where a microphone cannot detect the presence of a car, plane or some other modern machine to spoil the atmosphere.

Hans also introduced me to the different types of microphones used at such a professional radio station. Each had a special quality, which he knew from years of experience, lending a particular sharpness or warmth to the sound being captured. Hans also regarded himself as an archivist of sounds of machines that will perhaps never be heard again, such as the once ubiquitous East German Trabbi. Indeed, there was something alluring and almost magical about the way he described capturing sounds, as if he were distilling the very essence of a thing.

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## Internship #2 - Deutschlandradio

### 4.7 Reflection

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Initially, it was quite a culture shock adjusting to the formality of the Deutschlandradio institution after my hands-on experiences working to the slightly unorthodox Do-It-Yourself ethos at Radijojo. While Radijojo was heavily involved in the community and in schools, the atmosphere at Kakadu seemed insulated from the outside world. The program makers rarely went into the field and relied heavily on casual radio producers to create their reports.

At Kakadu, Claudia, Annette and their colleague Susanna all reported similar experiences in the field of children's radio broadcasting at Deutschlandradio. In one sense, they felt that they were ignored and that they were not taken seriously by the Deutschlandradio administration as radio producers. However, they felt that this situation had advantages as well as disadvantages. On the positive side they felt that they were left to make their own decisions regarding the content of the program. This led the Kakadu team to feel a sense of creative freedom. A negative aspect of this situation as they perceived it was that they felt that they exerted virtually no influence within the Deutschlandradio bureaucracy.

An example of this was that Kakadu's scheduled weekday broadcast time-slot of 1:30 pm conflicted with the average end of the primary school day at either 1 pm or 1:30 pm. The producer's preference was that the program be broadcast one hour later at 2:30 pm, allowing for children to travel home from school in time to listen to the show. It did seem to be a somewhat of an anomaly to broadcast a program in a timeslot

in which it was likely that the target audience would not be in a position to hear it. The producers of Kakadu voiced their frustrations at having been so far unable to influence a change to a later start in the scheduling of Kakadu. This was perceived by the makers of Kakadu as a demonstration of the lack of importance with which the program was regarded by the administration.

They expressed a frustration that I was to later find repeated at the state level funded programs of Lilipuz and Domino.- This frustration related to the problem of actually 'getting to' the children, being in touch with their listenership. By German law the statistics for radio listeners beneath the age of 14 are not collected so know one at Kakadu or any of the other children's radio programs could provide inform me as to how many listeners they had.

During my internship I attempted to gain an insight to the typical listener of the Kakadu. The producers of Kakadu make the reasonable assumption that their listeners were drawn mainly from the sons and daughters of regular listeners of Deutschlandradio. These adults could as a (generalised group) be labelled as the culturally educated elite of Germany's media consumers. As Kakadu does not advertise, it would appear that the role of parents in presenting Kakadu to the attention of their offspring is an important one. For children who are not informed of the existence of Kakadu by a parent, however, it is not unlikely that they would not know of its existence at all.

During a discussion with Kakadu presenter Susanne, she acknowledged the many factors such as the one's mentioned above that conspired to limit their audience numbers, but also emphasised that their role was to make high quality, intelligent and often intellectually challenging children's radio that was consistent with Deutschlandradio.

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## Research Visit #1 - Domino (HR)

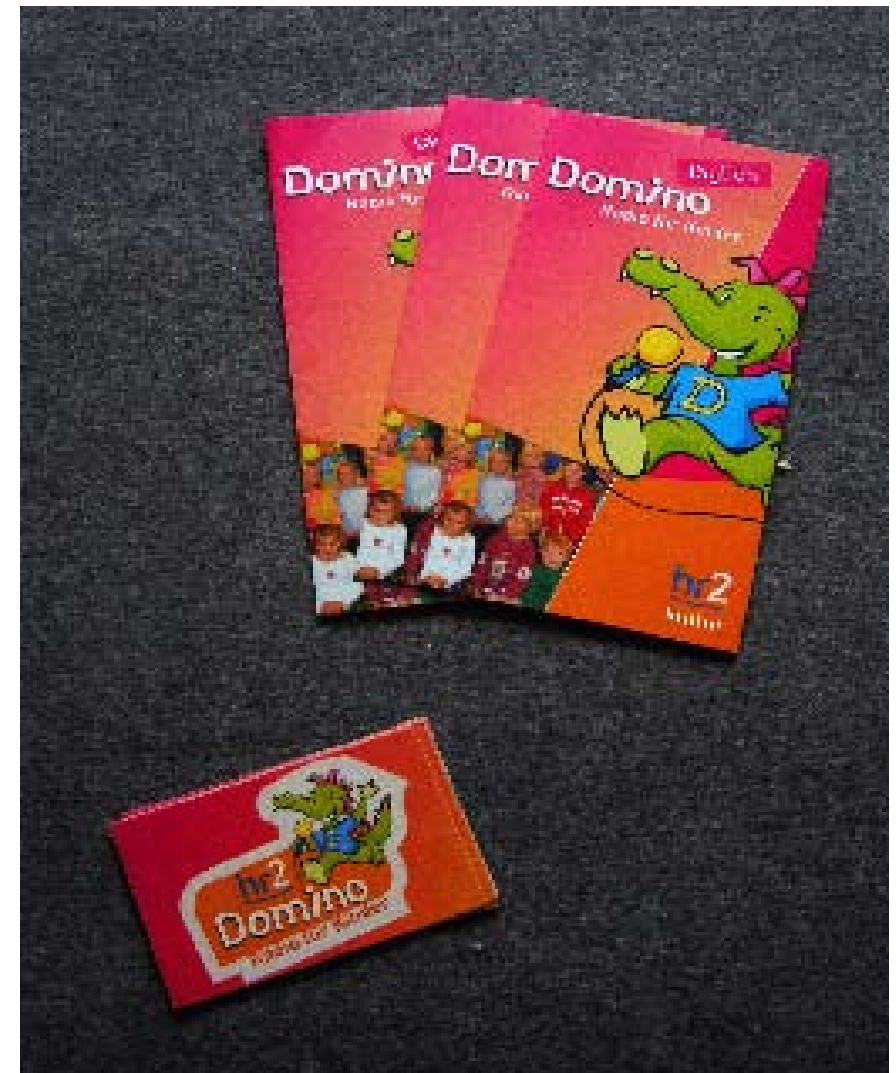
### 5.1.1 Profile, Facts & Finance

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Domino is the daily children's radio program of Hessischer Rundfunk, the state media institution of the state of Hessen. In terms of its formats, Domino presented an interesting hybrid between the models of Deutschlandradio, where all content was largely produced in-house or by freelancers, and the childrens' involvement occurred largely through talk back segments, and Radijojo, where the input of children was paramount and much of the content was produced in classrooms.

Especially interesting about Domino was its involvement of the community of the state. Domino published books and audio plays, was involved in community projects such as readings at libraries, and was generally extremely active in establishing its profile and increasing its audience.

Like all other government and state funded media institutions, HR is financed mostly through government subsidies and the broadcast fee all Germans who own radio transmitters and TV are obliged to pay. However, HR presents an exception in that some advertising is heard on its radio stations and in its television content. Domino, however, is free from advertising and therefore non-commercial.



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## Research Visit #1 - Domino (HR)

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### 5.1.2 Frequency

Domino can be heard for an hour every day all around the state of Hessen on different local frequencies. It is broadcast on HR2, the culturally oriented frequency among the six HR radio frequencies.

Domino places particular emphasis on utilising new technologies when it comes to supplying children and their parents with the daily dose of radio. Therefore, all radio content was made available through the internet as podcasts.

They made a point of explaining that it was important to them that this resource was also used by teachers, who could use the programs as inspirations and material for their lessons.

### 5.1.3 Programs & Projects

Producer/editor Dr Christian Maatje was very generous with the time he spent with me and tireless in his explanation of the various community events as well as the on air schedule at Domino. Domino appeared to be very active in becoming involved in the community in order to reach its audience. They frequently attach the Domino name to non-broadcast events such as classical music concerts for children. The program also opens its door annually for an open day in which families are drawn by a festival atmosphere created by performances and stalls. Domino also cooperates with a local newspaper in the form of a paragraph of newsprint for children daily.

Christian remarked that Domino represents all genres of radio broadcasting in their daily program. Indeed, for a small office they produce a staggering weekly output. Every Monday, the science program 'Schlaufuchs' included scientific discussion

and explanation of themes such as rainbows, acoustics, hibernation, sugar and mobile phones to name a few examples.

Three programs that rotated on a weekly basis filled Tuesdays. One was a music magazine style program that included features such as explanations of musical forms and trends. It also featured introductions to unusual instruments. A jury made up of children would also rate recently released children's music. The second program was concerned with the natural environment. The final program was a news service for children that sought to explain current news stories in the mainstream news. This program featured a regular segment on computers and had previously included stories on the European Union and increases in GST.

Wednesday's broadcast also rotated between three different programs on a weekly basis. One was all about wordplay. In this interactive program

children were encouraged to play along with a variety word games involving backwards words, special words, special sounds, detective stories, general knowledge and a quiz. Wednesday's second program included children as special expert guests and also as contributors in talk back segments on themes such as Christmas, volcanoes, ears, voting, dogs or even breakfast. The third program was called 'Hit Box'. The concept for this program was simply to play popular music for children. On Thursdays was broadcast one long (25 min.) detailed program on a single theme. Previous programs had included topics such as Dinosaurs, cancer and chocolate. On Friday's, Domino hosted a round-up magazine including a guide to events of interest for children. Saturday's program focussed on a radio story and included interviews with children's authors as well as children discussing books.

### 5.1.4 Experience & Reflection

At each of the radio stations that I visited I was interested in discovering how the production teams felt about their job. I wanted to discover what they liked and what was frustrating about their job. This was quite important to me, as this would be the sort of life that I would be leading. I had also been slightly concerned as to the relevance of this media form to young children. My experience meeting Dr Christian Maatje presented me with positive answers to these questions. Looking back I now believe that I was also attracted to Domino's position between the extremes I had experienced during my previous two internships. On the one side, there was the stern institutional atmosphere of Deutschlandradio, producing high-quality content with very skilled producers; on the other end of the spectrum was Radijojo, the cash-strapped children's

community radio built with the sweat and dedication of a few loyal believers. Dr Maatje and his team were in essence, exactly the people I had imagined working in this field. There was a sense of fun as well as pride in Dr Maatje's explanations of Domino's many projects. This was what had initially attracted me to this work. It looked like a lot of hard work, but also rewarding and fun.

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## Research Visit #2 - Liliputz (WDR)

### 5.2.1 Profile, Facts & Finance

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Liliputz is the daily dose of children's radio initiated, broadcast and financed by the Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR) in Cologne. The show is broadcast daily from 2.05pm until 3pm and is aimed at children from the ages of six to thirteen years of age.

A production team of six producers work on the program full-time along with two secretaries and sixty freelance contributors.

This team also produce a second daily program for very young children named Bärenbude which was started by Liliputz producer Ulla Illerhaus. This program is aimed at children from the ages of two to five. It is broadcast every day from 7:30pm to 8pm.



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## Research Visit #2 - Liliputz (WDR)

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### 5.2.2 Frequency

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Liliputz and Bärenbude are produced in Köln and are broadcast throughout Nordrhein-Westfalen by Westdeutscher Rundfunk Köln. Like Domino, they feature on different frequencies depending on the region.

Its extensive website ([www.lilipuz.de](http://www.lilipuz.de); [www.baerenbude.de](http://www.baerenbude.de)) features interactive content, among it a variety of podcasts both specifically produced for the net and recordings of the show.

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### 5.2.3 Programs & Projects

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The daily programming of Liliputz is similar in structure and content to that of both Domino and Kakadu, although the many school programs (once a week the show is produced from a school in Nordrhein Westfalen) suggest a closer resemblance to the Domino program.

A notable difference of Liliputz in comparison to the other children's radio programs that I visited was their strong emphasis on both web content as well as publishing their programs in the form of CDs and printed material that could be sold from shops. This can perhaps be attributed to the fact that as Nordrhein-Westfalen is one of the largest states of Germany, it also receives a considerably larger amount of funding. Its merchandise program however was extensive, with a dedicated store selling everything from the ubiquitous 'Sendung mit der Maus' umbrellas to exclusively produced 'Hörspiele' from Liliputz.

Liliputz put more effort into their online presence than any of the other radio stations that I visited in Germany. They claimed to produce an extraordinary 16 hours of audio content for their website everyday. The breadth and high quality of their web content was indeed testament to their efforts in this area.

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### 5.2.4 Experience & Reflection

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I visited with Liliputz producers Ulla Illerhaus and Tobias Gehle in the offices of WDR near the base of the Dome in Cologne, where I left loaded with Liliputz and Bärenbude collateral.

I was surprised to find that by the time I talked to them, many of the answers to my questions started to seem familiar. The themes in the government supported children's radio stations seemed universal; the struggle to reach and keep the audience, who are so much more preoccupied with other forms of media; the internal struggle for airtime within broadcasting institutions; the emphasis on non-radio based content such as podcasts, web content, merchandise and other collateral, such as DVDs and Hörspiele.

It appeared that the Liliputz show is only part of a much bigger brand, not the centre of it. Although this would of course not be the intention of its makers, this impression does show that children's radio stations, no matter whether they have to worry about their financing or not, all face similar issues; and that their major goal is to reach their audience through all means available to them. Not only radio.

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## Research Visit #3 - Logo (ZDF/KiKa)

### 5.3.1 Profile, Facts & Finance

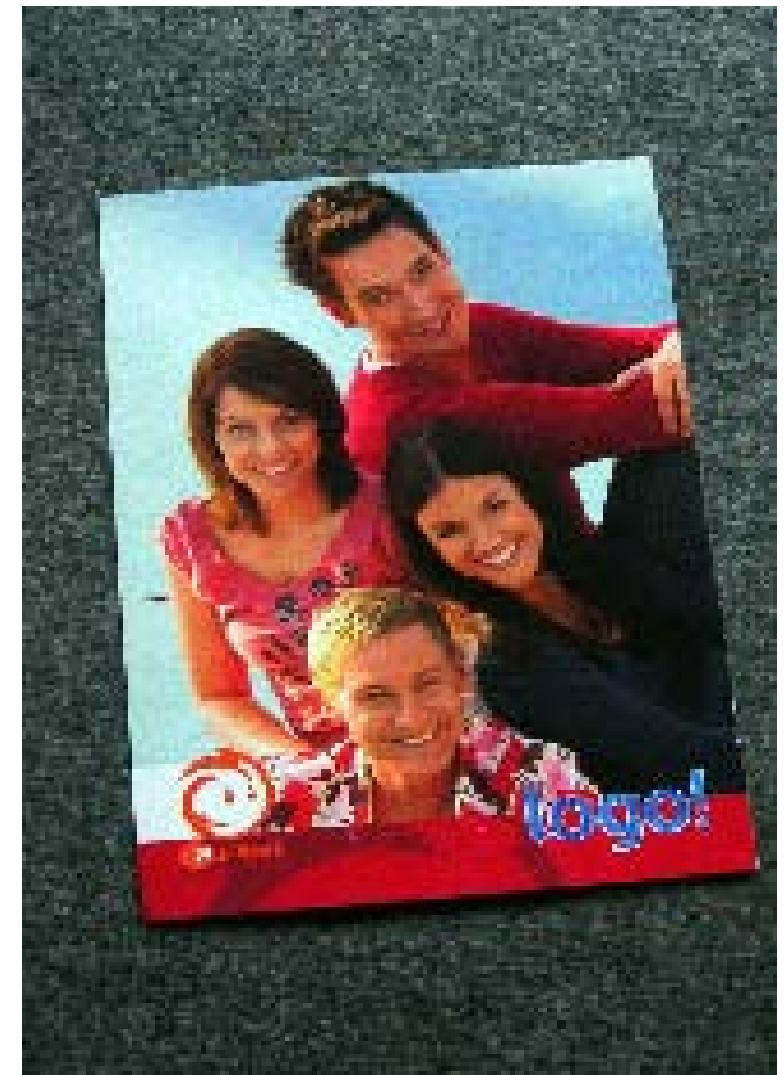
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Of the current educational media programs for children in Germany, logo!, a daily TV news program for children and young people, is the Dinosaur. Having broadcast for almost 20 years, the show with its kid-friendly content in adult format has accompanied an entire generation.

Around ten people, four of them presenters, are full-time logo! staff. The show is still produced at ZDF in Mainz, although it is now mostly broadcast on the dedicated children's channel KiKa.

Every day, logo! presents the news from around the world and Germany in a similar format to those of the daily news programs for adults, however their language, graphics and also the explanations provided are presented in a child friendly format.

Additionally, logo! takes to the road reporting from various places in Germany, as well as participating in and organising events related to news and topical issues. For instance, at the time of my visit, producers were preparing to become involved in the 'Kindergipfel', the children's summit that was to accompany the G8 summit to be held in Germany in June 2008.



### 5.3.2 Broadcast

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logo! is on air Saturday at 8.50 am on ZDF, The weekday programs are on air Monday through Friday at 4.50 pm on KiKa and again live at 7.50 pm from Monday through Thursday. KiKa is a television station dedicated to children's broadcasting.

### 5.3.3 Programs & Projects

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Logo! Contains news reports and describes political events, and also aims to explain difficult subjects in a way that children can understand and find exciting. The program covers a range of subjects including the environment, music, sports and the latest news from the world of celebrities. Logo! considers one of its great challenges to be the need to explain complicated matters in a simple form for children to understand. The only taboos are pictures that could frighten children, such as the dead and injured.

In regular segment Time to Talk children present a local issue that impacts on them as a group. Logo! advocates on behalf of children to stand up for their own interests. The logo!mobile is the trademark of Time to Talk. The brightly coloured and eye catching logo!mobile can be found at events for children where it is used as a speakers forum and

an information stand. Logo! has four presenters: Jule Gölsdorf, Anja Roth, Andrea Korn, and Kim Adler. They take turns to present the logo! news in the studio or report on current events. They aim to speak the language of their young viewers while radiating journalistic competence without being at all patronising when explaining the world.

Another character on the program is Gunnar, the logo! zebra, who rotates through the children's news as the programs mascot.

Since September 1998 it has been possible to receive logo! on the Internet as well as television. By visiting [www.logo.tivi.de](http://www.logo.tivi.de) children can keep up to date with regularly updated news reports, join in with the online knowledge game, express their opinions by participating in online surveys or they can give direct feedback using the guest book.

### 5.3.4 Experience & Reflection

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I visited logo!, which is produced on the massive compound of Germany's largest public broadcaster, ZDF, near Mainz.

The producers of logo! take their journalistic responsibilities very seriously in regards to the presentation of in-depth items. It is assumed by producers that children are only rarely informed from many different sources about news items and therefore their presentation of the 'truth' carries significant weight.

Logo! shares much with the Australian Broadcasting Commission's television news program for children, Behind the News (BTN).

Logo! has a snappy fast paced feel. The stories are short. The sets are bright. The presenters are young, fresh-faced and dress casually. They use a lot of visual graphics. Sound 'stings' are utilised to bookmark segments. The

programs are downloadable from the Internet. Although this was television, there was a familiar theme: in my interview with producer Anne-Rose Hoch she stressed the importance of having Internet material available as a support to any kind of children's media that is produced. She also remarked that it also served as an aid to teachers and older children for their homework.

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## Conclusion

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My research trip to Germany has been extremely successful in every way I had imagined.

I have gained valuable insight into what makes a successful radio program for children, and I have begun the process of building long-term relationships with children's media producers. Many of these relationships will no doubt be very beneficial for my future.

Upon my return to Australia, I immediately contacted some media producers I had been in touch with before I left; the Children's Music Foundation headed by former Playschool host Donald Spencer, as well as the RRR community station in Melbourne.

In both instances, the funding posed obvious hurdles to pursuing the idea of a radio program for children. Through approaches that had been made by other interested

persons, it also seemed that the current programming schedules of SBS radio and the ABC did not foresee the future inclusion of children's content.

One of the most valuable experiences in Germany was witnessing the ways of working of the producers of various children's radio programs. In this respect, I developed a particular admiration for Thomas Röhlinger from Radijojo for his tireless years of effort and determination in founding and building Radijojo. Considering that Australia so far is entirely devoid of any of children's radio content, Röhlinger's experiences provided the most realistic example for my own possible future life attempting to establish children's radio in Australia.

However, it appears that the Australian government, both on state and federal level, does not pursue the idea of educational children's media and therefore does not allocate

funding to such an operation. At the same time, a commercial model of children's radio would have to rely on advertising to sustain itself and this would bring to the surface ethical considerations. Further, even a commercial model would perhaps not always be the most successful route, as the recent demise of Britain's only commercial children's radio station showed. The station, CaptialDisney, was backed by some of the largest media conglomerates of the world and still had to close its doors in June this year after not making it over the commercial line after five years of operation.

As I had experienced in Germany, even those stations who received public funding often complained about the lack of financial means available to make their operations successful in marketing terms.

In my discussions with community radio stations in

Melbourne, I have found that they generally encouraged the idea of broadcasting material for children. This valuable opportunity is unfortunately counterbalanced by an economic problem. The staff responsible for making the programs at community stations are volunteers. The stations have no budget to hire producers such as myself. Yet I feel that a children's radio program or station would be such a considerable effort that only full-time dedication to the cause would produce a worthwhile result. However, in the search for an economically viable alternative model on which to base my project, I have begun to look for ways that are at the same time commercially viable and also independent from the heavily regulated and/or competitive industry of radio programming in Australia.

Here, my many conversations with German media producers

have also provided the most valuable ideas and great inspiration.

All of the producers stressed the stations' efforts in producing content outside of that for radio, mostly focusing on books, CDs or DVDs. At the same time, many emphasised the value that children's radio provided in the classroom, where teachers could use the material to inspire their lessons.

While in Germany, I developed a special interest in the tradition and success of audio stories, plays, educational material and music that is available to be purchased in CD format.

Throughout my visits to primary schools, I also learned that Germany's primary school children now have English lessons from a very young age.

To combine my interests in audio content and

technology, children's radio, multiculturalism and education, I am now researching a concept for the production of language 'Hörspiele' which can be used as a playful way for children to learn English; both in the classroom and outside of schools.

I believe this is a very interesting, viable concept and I hope this can be developed to be commercially available within the next year, thus perpetuating the purpose of this scholarship; to build long-standing professional bridges between Australia and Germany.