

You are listening to Radio Free Bob, a pirate radio station broadcasting on the Microsoft corporate network

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Back in the late 1980's, when NETBIOS ruled the land at Microsoft, one of my colleagues ran a pirate radio station on the Microsoft corporate network. Let's call this colleague *Bob*, my generic name for a Microsoft employee. Bob had converted a bunch of songs to WAV format (mp3 not yet having been invented) and kept them on his machine to listen to while he worked. But he also travelled from room to room to investigate problems in various offices and labs. This was also the days before laptop computers and iPods. A portable computer was one of these puppies, affectionately known as a *luggable* because it was the size of (and weighed more than) a suitcase. Bob liked to listen to music while he worked, and since he couldn't take his music with him, he did what he thought was the next best thing: He had his music come to him. Bob wrote a program to stream his music collection over the Microsoft corporate network. Of course, Bob didn't want to have to pre-program the list of offices and labs he was going to visit during the day (in part of course because at the start of the day, he didn't know where he was going to be), so the program broadcasted his music collection to every computer at Microsoft. That way, no matter where he (or anybody else) was, he could listen to his music collection. He called this service *Radio Free Bob*. Radio Free Bob was not on the air for very long, however, before getting the heat from *The Man*. Pumping that much data to every computer at Microsoft, even the machines in overseas offices like Hong Kong and Berlin, doesn't sit well with corporate network administrators. I don't know the exact number, but it was consuming some huge percentage of the network bandwidth of the entire company. The IT department frantically triangulated the packets, identified the building that was the source of the network broadcasts, narrowed it down to a specific wing of the building, then began a room-by-room search for the offending computer, descending upon it like a SWAT team.

Thus ended the short life of Radio Free Bob.

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