PPM Encoding Best Practices

An Update for Station Engineers on Encoding Best Practices

- Install the Nielsen Audio PPM Encoder downstream of any switching or delay equipment in a location that offers consistent audio levels (+4dBu for Analog, -20dBFS for Digital).
- If configured for external time sync, connect the Nielsen Audio PPM Encoder to an accurate external time source (Master Clock or Time Server) if one is available in your facility.
    - If using Network Time Protocol (NTP) ensure time on the server is set to UTC, not local time.
- If you are using the Nielsen Software Encoder (SDK code and check digits) in processor, streamer, hardware or software from a Nielsen certified vendor, be sure UTC is set in accordance to your manufacturer's instructions.
- Connect the Nielsen Audio PPM Encoders and In-Station PPM Encoding Monitor(s) to a central alarming system if one is available at your facility.
    - If your facility does not have a central alarming system consider setting up email alerts for your multi-channel encoding monitor (MCEM).
    - Instructions for setting up MCEM alerts can be found on the Nielsen Audio Engineering portal.
- All encoders at your facility should be racked and powered with audio input.
    - No cold spares.
- Ensure audio you send or receive to/from other stations is un-encoded.
    - Re-encoding a piece of audio that has already been encoded may affect station crediting.
- Periodically switch between encoding on your Primary Encoder and encoding on your Backup Encoder.
    - A good guideline is to run on your back-up for 1 week every month.
- Connect your Nielsen In-Station PPM Encoding Monitor to an over-the-air feed of your broadcast to ensure that the aired broadcast was in fact properly encoded.
    - All stations that are encoded should be monitored, including HD1 simulcasts.
- Encode each of your stations transmission paths that can go to air, even paths that would only be used in an emergency.
- Cool the encoder with an external fan if the ambient temperature in the room regularly nears 85°F.
- Periodically check the tuner that is connected to the MCEM to ensure it is working properly.
- Ensure that your station's MCEM is updated with the current firmware.
    - The latest firmware version can be found on the Nielsen Audio Engineering portal.

In the event that you need assistance in diagnosing any encoding alarm received from your Nielsen Audio PPM Encoder or In-Station PPM Encoding Monitor contact your Audio Client Engineer at 1-866-767-7212, or email encoding@nielsen.com

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