IREN was created as a consortium for a Coordination Action under the European Commission’s Sixth Framework Programme of Technological Research and Development, within the thematic priority 7 “Citizens and Governance in a Knowledge Society”, and in research domain: “New forms of citizenship and cultural identities”.

IREN Contract n° CIT2-CT-2004-506475

Having begun on March 1-st, 2004, the contract will end on December 31, 2006.
«Most Europeans live in a visual culture, our very languages permeated with expressions that relate to sight, a culture that has evolved over centuries since the invention of printing prioritized visual over aural skills. Listening to radio is so interwoven in people's lives it has become a habit like eating or opening a window. Something similar applies to this experience that occurs inside our heads. It is part of us, we own it – "my station", "our tune" – and we don't necessarily want to share this private experience.»

(Peter Lewis, 2004/26 – DIFFUSION online EBU/UER)
IREN starts from the premise that radio is widely neglected in debates on the European public sphere and the role of the media, and that this neglect is due to the ‘under-development’ of academic study and research on the subject. But at the same time, in the research field of media, communication and cultural studies, interest in radio has developed over the last few years. Academic networks and study groups have been formed in the United Kingdom, in France, in Ireland, in Italy and in Scandinavia. Initiatives multiply.
IREN has drawn on these experiences to build a trans-national project adapted to this particular field of study.

The objectives of the IREN network are to encourage and coordinate radio research and study at a European or international level.

This was the purpose of the founders IREN, meeting for the first time, on January 31, 2003, at Louvain-La-Neuve’s University, in Belgium, after the idea was conceived, one year previously, in Bordeaux.

Created within the framework of European Commission research programs, the actual network groups includes thirteen (13) institutional partners, from ten (10) European countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom).
Founder members of IREN network and their representatives are:

CNRS, CERVL, Pouvoir, Action Publique, Territoire, UMR 5116, France, Jean-Jacques Cheval (IREN Co-ordinator) / GRER, Groupe de Recherches et d’Etudes sur la Radio

London School of Economics and Political Sciences (LSI), United Kingdom, Peter M. Lewis (IREN Scientific Co-ordinator) / Radio Studies Network

Caricomm Konsult, Sweden, Carin Åberg

Hans-Bredow-Institut, Germany, Uwe Hasebrink

University of Siena, Italy, Enrico Menduni

EMA-RTV, Spain, Manuel Chaparro Escudero

Catholic University of Louvain la Neuve, Belgium, Frédéric Antoine

Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, Ireland, Rosemary Day

Catholic University of Lublin, Poland, Stanislaw Jedrzejewski

University of the Basque Country, Spain, Carmen Peñafiel Saiz

IULM University, Milan, Italy, Marta Perrotta

University of Hamburg, Germany, Hans J. Kleinsteuber

National & Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece, Angeliki Gazi
IREN wants to encourage and support study and research in all disciplines in which radio is relevant; gain recognition for this work

Main objectives for the project are:

The creation of a network

Mapping and recording radio-related research competencies and research projects

Identifying instances of radio’s use in encouraging the involvement of citizens in the public sphere

Special encouragement to younger scholars

A dialogue with broadcasting organizations

Dissemination of research interests and findings through meetings, conference papers etc
IREN has been active in carrying out its own programme of conferences, and in making contributions to academic publications, and to other meetings and seminars, including those organised by broadcasters nationally and at the European (EBU/UER) or international level.

Since its launch in 2004, IREN has organized several regional meetings and international scientific colloquia in Bordeaux, Athens, Siena, Seville, Limerick, Bilbao and Lublin and plans its final meeting in Brussels in November 2006.
Bordeaux, 1, 2 and 3 of April, 2004
SIENA, 26 of July - 1st of August 2004

INTERNATIONAL RADIO SUMMER SCHOOL
SIENA, 26 JULY - 1 AUGUST 2004

The International Radio Summer School is a scientific meeting dedicated to radio experiences and cultures promoted by University of Siena, an academic institution in which radio is studied continuously and in depth (with a specific Radio degree course and “Radio Facoltà” at Faculty), the leading college radio station in Italy.

Following the successful experience of Siena Radio Summer School in 2003, this School will combine plenary sessions and debate with discussion groups and practical workshops led by experienced radio practitioners. Forty places will be available for students, coming from various countries in and outside Europe. Thus the School will combine the features of an international conference and a learning experience for students. Presentations by academics will be therefore designed to address students as well as peers.

Partners of the International Radio Summer School are: RAI and the Radio Studies Network.

IREN is a project to develop a research network across Europe with 13 partners (academic or professional institutions) in 14 countries, recognised and supported by the EU.

Radio Studies Network is a UK association of lecturers and researchers whose aim is to encourage study and research in radio and seek ways to improve its academic and cultural status.

The International Radio Summer School will take place from Monday 26 July to Sunday 1 August 2004 in Collegio Santa Chiara (see overview and maps), an historic University College in central Siena, recently restored and refurbished, close to University central buildings, the Ferrari Piazzale dei Campi, and the University Radio-Station (www.radiouniversita.ensit).

This International Radio Summer School will organise more than 40 hours of teaching and learning over seven days, including seminars and workshops, and offer to participating students an attendance certificate worth 4 European Credit Units (ECUs). Languages will be English, French and Italian. Simultaneous translation of plenary sessions will be provided. A limited number of bursaries are available to assist the participation of younger researchers and postgraduate students.

An international Call for Papers, open to both academic researchers and radio professionals, is available on Summer School website - www.radiouniversita.net, asking for submissions on the following themes:

- Radio and digital convergence: Internet radio - Digital information radio - Radio art - Return to wireless
- Radio programmes: Radio genres - news, magazines, sport, talk radio, quiz shows, drama, advertising, documentary - Radio and news

Participants giving papers will have the opportunity to lead workshops and discussion groups.

An international panel of referees will select abstracts for development as original papers, and for possible subsequent publication. Presentations on the day will be limited to 15 minutes, but complete papers must be submitted in advance to ensure time for peer review.

EARRAM 2: Following the successful pilot of EARRAM 1 at SIENA 2004, a Radioassembly, a series of Exciting and Adventurous Radio will be held daily throughout the Summer School.

A temporary programme of the school is available on www.radiouniversita.net.

For further information: www.radiouniversita.net / school@radiouniversita.net

Athens, 4 of November 2004

Exploring possibilities for enhancing radio research

List of participants:
- Aberg Carin, Associate Professor, MD Cancom Konsult Uppsala, Sweden, IREX
- Antoine Frederic, Professor, Université Catholique de Louvain, IREX
- Asimakopoulou Vicky, Research Executive, Kappa Research
- Barboutis Christos, Doctoral Candidate, University of Western Sydney
- Chaparro Escudero Manuel, Prof. Universidad de Malaga, Director Asociación de Emisores Municipales de Andalucía de Radio y Television, IREX
- Cheval Jean -Jacques, Maître de Conférences, Université Michel de Montaigne, Bordeaux 3, Coordonateur IREX
- Evenis Aiki, Journalist, Radio producer
- Gazi Angelikis, Doctoral Candidate, University of Athens, IREX
- Giannara Eirini, Doctoral Candidate, Radio producer, E.R.A (Hellenic Radio)
- Hairetakis Manolis, Assistant Professor, University of Athens
- Hasebrink Uwe, Prof. University Hamburg, Director Hans Bredow Institute, IREX
- Kletamaki Olga, President of the Institute for the Audiovisual Media (the official body for the study of the media)
- Kourtoglou Xenia, President Focus (Athens Marketing Research Centre)
- Lewis Peter, Research Fellow, Department of Media & Communications London School of Economics & Scientific Co-ordinator IREX
- Meimaris Michalis, Prof. University of Athens, Director of New Technologies Laboratory
- Menduni Emrzo, Prof. Universita Degli Studi Di Siena
- Pantzogoulou Konstantinos, Radio Producer, E.R.A (Hellenic Radio)
- Sorogas Evangelos, Lecturer, University of Athens
- Tsoulos Antonia, Account Director, Leo Burnett
- Tsourvakas Giorgos, Lecturer, University of Thessalonika
- Tsesas Athanasios, Lecturer, University of Athens
- Tzametakos Yiannis, Journalist, former General Director of E.R.A (Hellenic Radio)
- Vasilopoulou Lina, General Director of "Best FM" (private radio station)
- Vlahinos Dimitrios, Radio Producer, "Odissey FM" (private radio station)
- Yiannakakis Maria, Press Attaché

Phone: +30 210 32 28 191
Fax: +30 210 32 28 822
Email: iarex@hsb.ege.gr
"Un solo mundo voces múltiples."

V CONGRESO INTERNACIONAL DE RADIOS Y TELEVISIONES LOCALES PÚBLICAS Y ALTERNATIVAS
SEVILLA 23, 24, 25 y 26 de FEBRERO 2005

Seville, 23 - 26 of February, 2005
IREN was also represented in numerous meetings, as co-organizer or participant (Copenhagen, Hamburg, Lyon, Milan, Palma of Majorca, Paris, Warsaw… but also Bamako, Buenos Aires, Melbourne, Montreal…) 

And in Sunderland, at Sounding Out 3, in September 2006
Another example of IREN's presence was in Lyon (France), in May, 2006, where the GRER, Group of Researches and Studies on the Radio, the French national research association on the radio, organized its 3rd international colloquium, in association with the University Lyon 3 - Jean Moulin

http://www.grer.fr
Participants in all these conferences were Academics, Researchers, Radio Broadcasters, Regional and Local Government Officials.

Size of audiences were from 60 to 115.

The countries addressed were: Australia, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Cameroon, Colombia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lebanon, Morocco, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mexico, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Senegal, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Togo, Turkey, United Kingdom, Uruguay, USA, Venezuela, Zimbabwe.
“Begin a dialogue with broadcasting organisations…”

Two partners are professional broadcasters as well as university lecturers - Manuel Chaparro, Director of EMA-RTV, and Stanislaw Jedrzejewski, Director of Polish Radio1 and a member of the Radio Committee of the EBU/UER; their positions and their advice have been helpful in furthering dialogue.

Following discussions in London and Geneva with EBU/UER, arranged with the help of Stanislaw Jedrzejewski, IREN representatives were invited to make presentations at conferences organised by the Radio Committee of the European Broadcasting Union. In addition, IREN Partners have made presentations to other meetings attended by academics and broadcasters.

For example: the Seminar Exploring possibilities for enhancing radio research organised by IREN and Kapodistrian University of Athens, and attended by eight IREN partners and seventeen Greek academics and broadcasters, November 4, 2004.
“To give special encouragement to younger scholars”

Based on an inclusive interpretation of the phrase ‘younger scholars’ so as not to overlook researchers of any age at the start of their academic career, the project has made special efforts to bring in ‘junior researchers’ to its events.

A special round table, organised at Seville on New Directions For Radio Research And Experiment, attracted 30 participants of whom 12 were called on to summarise their research or work in progress.

A significant proportion of the funds allocated to partners was spent on assisting the participation of younger researchers to attend the IREN meetings.

Some specific collaborations are born and, for example, some PhD co-direction.
The Web-Site and the database

They are and will be still in process; fundings are being transferred to it for public release.

The database is being built up through the contributions at the conferences and at other meetings.

It will map and record radio-related research competencies and research projects…etc. It means a picture of the state-of-the-art in the academic field and as regards the European radio industry.

http://www.iren-info.org/
Creation of a durable network

And in order to continue these activities after the initial, funded period, ways are being sought to create structures that will contribute to the development and recognition of radio research.

One opportunity will occur through the Radio Section of ECREA, the European Communication Research and Education Association

(http://www.ecrea.eu/)

At present, this section is being organized around 3 members of IREN:

Rosemary Day (Ireland), Chair, 
rosemary.day@mic.ul.ie

Angeliki Gazi (Greece), Vice-chair, 
gaziag@media.uoa.gr

Stanislaw Jedrzejewski (Poland), 
Vice-chair, radiotak@kul.lublin.pl.
And now the last meeting of the IREN consortium take place in Belgium, where the project was set up on January 2003. Yesterday at the University of Louvain-la-Neuve and today here in Brussels.
The Brussels colloquium steering committee

Frédéric Antoine: antoine@reci.ucl.ac.be

Jean-Jacques Cheval: chevaly@club-internet.fr

Peter Lewis: p.m.lewis@lse.ac.uk
Around the general question of “The way ahead for radio research” the following themes for discussion are proposed.

- Is it necessary to re-think radio theory?
  Can radio research free itself from the grip of theories laid down in the golden age of the media?

- The social uses of radio
  Radio as a social agent
  Community radio

- New uses of radio
  Radio and new technologies
  Qualitative studies of the radio audience

- The evolution of radiophonic production
  The language of radio

- Towards a ‘néo-sémiologie’ for radio
  Revisiting the meaning of the radiophonic message
« ... The radio on whose dial can be found the names and wavelengths of stations, cities and distant lands. The needle sweeps through places from an inaccessible geography... How is it possible that there could be people in so small a box? How could they squeeze in there? How did they get in? Inside the dwelling you can hear the measured scrape of a horse's hooves, the grating of metal wheels on paving stones lashed by the rain of a faraway winter coming from another century, of another city, ... inhabited by voices, by all the impossible voices of the world... »

« ... la radio où sont inscrits les nombres et les noms des stations, des villes, et des pays lointains ... l'aiguille survole les lieux d'une géographie inaccessible, ... est-il possible qu'il y ait des gens dans une boîte aussi petite, comment arrivent-ils à se tasser, par où sont-ils entrés ? ...

et on entend dans la grande pièce le frottement lent des sabots d'un cheval, un grincement de roues métalliques sur des pavés fouettés par la pluie d'un hiver éloigné, venu d'un autre siècle, d'une autre ville, ... habitée par des voix, par toutes les voix impossibles du monde... »

Antonio Muñoz Molina
« El Jinete Polaco / Le Royaume des Voix », 1991
“... la radio donde están los números y los nombres de las emisoras y de las ciudades y remotos países... la aguja se desplaza por los lugares de una geografía inaccesible ... ¿cómo es posible que haya gente dentro de esa caja tan pequeña, cómo se encogen de tamaño, por dónde logran entrar ... y se oyen en el interior de la habitación los cascos lentos de un caballo y un chirrido de ruedas metálicas sobre adoquines azotados por la lluvia de un invierno extranjero y de otro Siglo, de otra ciudad, ... que sólo habitan voces, todas las voces imposibles del mundo...”