

Controversial style of radio station to launch in Oxford

A CONTROVERSIAL style of radio station — which outraged New York mayor Michael Bloomberg — is launching in Oxford.

Since it was conceived in Canada four years, the 'Jack' style of radio has taken North America by storm and now boasts 52 stations across the continent.

The concept is simple — cut out the DJs, the callers and the competitions, limit the adverts to just six minutes an hour and play a wide mix of music predominantly from top-selling album artists over the last 20 years.

Following its success in the United States, British-based company Absolute Radio has bought the format for the UK.

And Oxford will be the first city in Britain to house the station and broadcasts will begin in July.

Its target audience will be people in their 30s and 40s and it will seek to compete with Fox FM, BBC Oxford and Radio 2.

Absolute Radio operations manager Clive Dickens said: "We are targeting the people who have become increasingly disenfranchised by local radio which tends to be more commercial featuring top 40 music or has too much repetition."

A team of three presenters will head up a four-hour breakfast show on the station, but the rest of the time it will broadcast back-to-back music punctuated only by hourly news and traffic bulletins.

Mr Dickens added: "In between the music the voice of 'Jack' will fire off irreverent comments on the world and poke fun at the formats of other stations."

"It gives our brand a point of difference and is best described as being like an iPod shuffle — a random

choice of tunes selected from a vast library featuring over 1,500 songs.

"In the United States Jack has been hugely successful and has allowed commercial radio to grow even in an iPod age."

The format was not, however, popular with New York mayor Mr Bloomberg, *pictured*, who said he would "never listen to that f***** CBS radio again" after the Big Apple's legendary oldies station WCBS-FM was taken off the air and replaced with a Jack station.

The station's response was a trailer which said: "Hey, Mayor Bloomberg, what's with all the swearing like a sailor? It's just music."

Mr Dickens added: "We are not trying to upset people, it's just a bit of fun!"

He said there was no specific reason why Oxford had been chosen as the first city to host the Jack brand, but he said there were plans to launch it in other regions across the country in the future.

Jack will be the fourth service for the county but by the spring of next year a further four local stations will be created as digital radio comes online.

The station will be in Woodstock Road and will share an office with 107.9FM.

