

P R O F I L E



Language of Broadcast: Lao
Content: 3.5 hrs. of original radio programming per week; Internet
Distribution: 7 affiliates (7 FM), 2 IBB MW and SW frequencies
Radio: All Lao Service broadcasting is done from outside Laos. In addition to broadcasts on IBB facilities, the Service's 7 radio affiliates are based in Thailand near the border with Laos. They broadcast the Service's programming into Laos.
New Media: The Service has a website, a Facebook page, and sends an email newsletter.
Staff: 5 **Budget:** \$679,000
Established: 1962 to present



Language of Broadcast: Lao
Content: 12 hrs. of original radio programming per week; Internet
Distribution: 4 FM affiliates in Thailand, 2 IBB SW frequencies, satellite audio; mobile phone
Radio: The Service broadcasts two hours of original programs daily.
New Media: Includes a multimedia website, a mobile site, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter.
Staff: 13 **Budget:** \$1,399,000



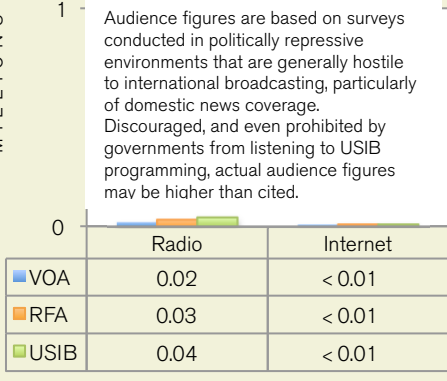
Established: 1997 to present

P E R F O R M A N C E D A T A

(Using Data from Laos, May 2011)

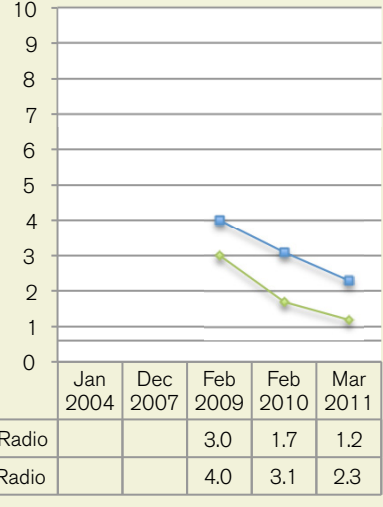
Audience Size

MILLIONS



Weekly Reach by Media (%)			
	VOA	RFA	USIB
Radio	1.1	2.3	2.9
TV	na	na	na
Internet	0.2	0.1	0.3
Total	1.2	2.3	3.0

Weekly Reach %



Awareness (%)	
VOA	RFA
10	26

Credibility

Percentage of surveyed weekly audience that finds broadcasts credible (%)**		
	VOA	RFA
Radio	na	na
TV	na	na

Understanding

Percentage of weekly audience whose understanding of topics increased "A Great Deal" or "Somewhat" (%)**		
	VOA	RFA
Current Events	na	na
U.S. Culture (VOA) or Current Events in Laos (RFA)	na	na
U.S. Policies	na	na

Quality

Combined Scores from audience panel		
	VOA	RFA
Radio	3.3	3.0
TV	na	na

lao

*Due to differences in the sample areas and in weighting, trend data for the Laos surveys conducted before February 2009 are not available.

**Samples of VOA and RFA weekly listeners in the survey are too small for meaningful analysis.

May 2011 survey of adults (15-64) in urban Laos. They are representative of the entire urban adult population only (about 27% of the total population of Laos).

Lao Broadcasting

A U D I E N C E C O M P O S I T I O N

	Sample	VOA Weekly Aud.**	RFA Weekly Aud.**
Sex	%	%	%
Male	50	na	na
Female	50	na	na
Age			
15-24	37	na	na
25-34	23	na	na
35-44	17	na	na
45-54	11	na	na
55-64	12	na	na
65+	0	na	na

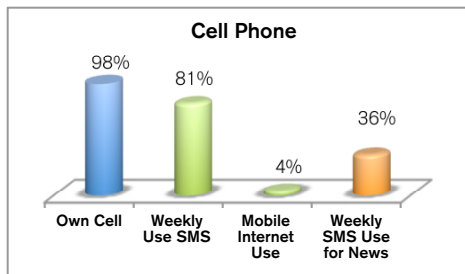
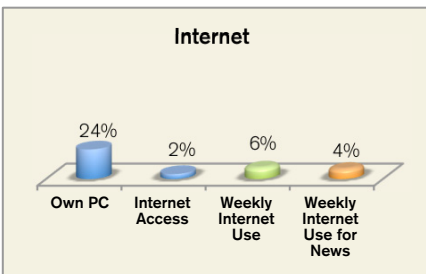
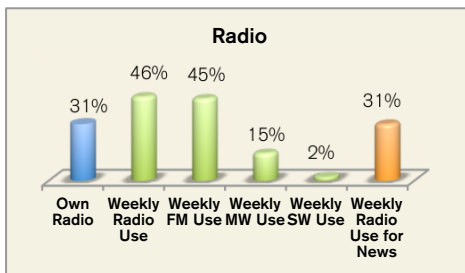
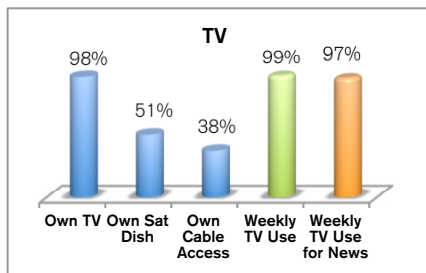
	Sample	VOA Weekly Aud.**	RFA Weekly Aud.**
Education	%	%	%
No formal	1	na	na
Primary	23	na	na
Lower Sec.	29	na	na
Upper Sec.	23	na	na
Technical	14	na	na
Higher	11	na	na
Ethnicity/Nationality			
Lao	90	na	na
Hmong	3	na	na
Other	7	na	na

Total Population of Laos: 6.3 million

	Sample	VOA Weekly Aud.**	RFA Weekly Aud.**
Residence	%	%	%
Urban	69	na	na
Rural	31	na	na
Language			
Lao	95	na	na
Hmong	3	na	na
Other	2	na	na

**Samples of VOA and RFA weekly listeners in the survey are too small for meaningful analysis.

M E D I A U S E



Top Ten Media Outlets

1. TV 7 (Thai)
2. TV 3 (Thai)
3. TV 5 (Thai)
4. TV Lao Channel 3
5. Sabaidee TV
6. TV 9 (Thai)
7. Local provincial TV stations
8. TV Lao National
9. TV 11/NBT (Thai)
10. Local provincial radio stations

Web Analytics

VOA Weekly Visitors	3,400
Weekly Visits	9,300
RFA Weekly Visitors	5,000
Weekly Visits	9,900

C O N T E X T



Political Situation

- **Freedom House Political Freedom Index (2011): NOT FREE**
- **Economist Intelligence Unit Instability (2010): MODERATE RISK**
- The Lao People's Democratic Republic is a poor, land-locked country with a one-party socialist government, little civil society and weak legal and institutional frameworks. In 2012, Freedom House gave Laos the lowest possible ratings for electoral process, political pluralism and functioning of government – a distinction shared only by North Korea and Somalia.
- Laos' per capita income of \$1050 puts it among the least developed countries in the world. International organizations give Laos a low rating for transparency and ease of doing business because of endemic corruption and weak legal system. Laos is heavily dependent on international aid.
- Neighbors have vied for influence in Laos. While Laos has had a "special relationship" with Vietnam since it signed a treaty of friendship and cooperation in 1977, its relationship with China has grown in recent years with growing investment and an influx of Chinese laborers. Ties with traditional rival, Thailand, also have increased since the government signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Thailand in 2007.
- Land confiscations and illegal logging are serious issues in the country where, officials have provided foreign investors access land and forests in exchange for bribes.

Media Environment

- **Freedom House Press Freedom Index (2011): NOT FREE**
- **Reporters Without Borders Index (2011): 89.00 (165/179)**
- In spite of recent investment in communications infrastructure and a new 2008 law ensuring media freedom, Laos is among the most repressive media environments in the world. Laos' criminal code allows imprisonment of journalists for publishing materials that "weaken the state" and for importing media "contrary to national culture."
- While linguistic similarities make Thai media popular among those who can receive it, RFA and VOA are the only Western broadcasters providing content in Lao. China Radio International has Lao broadcasts easily available on the FM dial in some Lao cities.
- Any media that does not conform to the Communist party line is dealt with swiftly. In January of 2012, a popular call-in show and host were taken off the air after allowing discussion of land confiscations.
- Mobile phone ownership is almost universal in urban Laos, where 51 percent of households also have a satellite dish.
- Web use is limited but growing in Laos, especially among young elites. Among those who do use the Web, getting news, watching videos and accessing social media sites (including Facebook and Yahoo360) are popular activities.