

Story: Catherine Bruck, University Archivist  
 Photos: Courtesy of IIT Archives



Unidentified DJ with “Beach Boys’ Party!” LP album cover, perhaps in Student Union (formerly, the Armour Mission building; non-extant), ca. 1965

## From Suits and Ties to “Trucker Caps and Cowboy Hats”: IIT’s Campus Radio Station

**IIT’s campus radio station**, heard on 88.9 FM, began as Armour Institute of Technology’s experimental radio station and has been in operation since 1931. Now prominently located in The McCormick Tribune Campus Center (MTCC) with the call letters WIIT, the station has moved locations six times (Chapin Hall, Brown Hall, the Mission Building, HUB, Main Building, MTCC), changed its call letters an equal number of times (W9NV, W9YW, WIIT, WIIU, WOUI, and back to WIIT), and switched from AM (640) to FM (88.9) over its history. Early DJs included faculty and students. Today’s volunteer DJs cover the spectrum of sounds and topics—from rock and rap to country; IIT librarians Matt Cook and John Dorr host a Monday noontime country and western program, “Trucker Caps and Cowboy Hats.”

Another transformation is the way people listen to the music and speech broadcast over radio waves. While radio is the earliest form of electronic mass communication, WIIT’s broadcast booth sits within ear- and eyesight of MTCC’s bank of broadband computer stations, representing one of the newest forms of electronic mass communication. Students can sit at computer terminals a few yards from where the campus radio programs originate and listen to WIIT radio programs over the Internet. Of course, the sound first converts instantaneously from analog radio waves to digital electrical impulses.

While WIIT generally can be heard the “old-fashioned way” within a two-mile radius of MTCC, the best way to hear it away from Main Campus is via the Internet. Newer still, WIIT has begun Podcasting its shows via iTunes. *To hear the broadcasts online and for instructions on how to hear Podcasts of shows, visit WIIT’s website, <http://radio.iit.edu>.*



WIIT staffers, perhaps celebrating the recently granted FM antenna and license, ca. 1975-1976; far right may be station manager Dave Dickson; far left may be business manager John Casey

### Sharing History

Do you have interesting materials from IIT’s past—books or manuscripts from Armour Institute, Lewis Institute, or IIT and its schools—that you would like to donate to the university’s archives? *To find out if your IIT treasure could help chart history at the university, contact IIT Archivist Catherine Bruck at [archives@iit.edu](mailto:archives@iit.edu) or 312.567.6840.*