

# DJ Jon in Space

"DJ Jon" Hawkins enters the final frontier: satellite radio.

BY JASON HJORT

As a fixture in the Portland music scene who combines existing tracks in creative combinations, please explain how it's legal to sell other people's music as a mix tape.

It's legal because I get permission to do it, not to mention it's becoming recognized as its own art form. I've been lucky enough to work with some of the biggest names in the music industry, including 50 Cent and Snoop Dogg. I also work as a Mix Show DJ on WRED-95.9, which means I take the music that's in rotation and mix it in a one-hour set from 5 to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday.

With the guidance of my manager, I've been able to build solid relationships with key people on the business side of the music industry. The artists and their respective labels know that in an image-conscious market, street credibility is very important. Mix tapes are a way for artists to succeed in the hip hop industry, because they serve as a gateway to the zeitgeist of the hip hop community. So, it's easy to get permission to use songs. In fact, the labels have their studio engineer send DJs new songs way before they are released in



stores in hopes they will appear on the mix tape. Sometimes the songs are so new that I end up mastering them myself for the mix tape. In collaborations like this, sometimes magic strikes. 50 Cent and the whole G-Unit graciously decided to host my latest mix CD, *Hype 101*, which was very difficult with all the recent controversy and violence surrounding 50 Cent's career.

**You have a show on satellite radio now?**

I am in a DJ crew called The League, which includes two of Cleveland, Ohio's, top DJs, Mick Boogie and Joey Fingaz. Mick is huge in the hip hop industry and when Sirius hired him, he got me an audition. My show is on Channel 42 (WAX-42) and it rotates daily. Feedback has been excellent so far. Sirius has over a million subscribers and puts me on the same platform with artists like Eminem and sports news companies like ESPN, who have shows on Sirius. When Howard Stern joins Sirius in 2006, the stock is expected to skyrocket. Recently, AOL hired The League to produce shows for their internet radio service, "AOL Radio." So now my show on AOL is rotated everyday. AOL has over 25 million subscribers worldwide, not bad for someone looking for a parking space on Casco Street every day [where he works as an audio engineer at The Studio].

**Your 1980s night collaboration with Dori Hart at Bubba's is a huge success.**

It's my favorite club night right now. I get to utilize all my skills as a hip hop DJ in an entirely new way. That means scratching, mixing, and trick-mixing pop songs on actual wax! Unlike pop music of today, 1980s music is extremely diverse—some good, some hilarious, and some so bad it's good. I spend hours every week laughing, researching music, and inventing transitions and routines. Fortunately, people seem to get the joke!

**Where can we go to hear hip hop around town?**

The hip hop community in Portland goes to Free Street Taverna on Monday nights. Boondocks hosts open mic hip hop there. Look for Aframe & Mic Clouds, Dirt Coalition, Milled Pavement, Brzowski, Ill Natural, Tommy Gunz, Lab 7, Don Nauts, Rob Banks, Solo, MaineHipHop.com, Dynamo, Merk, and many others, all of them from Maine. [www.djjon.com](http://www.djjon.com)