

What's Hot in DAB!



The World DAB Forum Newsletter
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MARKETING DAB IN NORTH RHINE WESTPHALIA

This month (March) in Germany, Digital Radio West (DRW) launched a big marketing campaign in North Rhine Westphalia. The aim is to raise awareness and information levels among local retailers in the region.

More than 100 retailers attended an event in Cologne covering DAB marketing activities, station programming and content, technology and strategy from a list of contributors including Digital Radio West, the IMDR, WorldDAB, WDR and LfR, the local commercial broadcasting regulator. Also on hand demonstrating the latest DAB products from around the world were Blaupunkt, Terratec, VideoLogic, AUDIONET, Clarion, ECMD, E-Lead, Grundig, Kenwood, PERSTEL, Pioneer, Sony, TMC, and Zoopad.

Star of the event was probably the PERSTEL mini handheld DAB/FM receiver that comes with MP3 and voice recorder (see below for more details). With a competitive price point and a June 2002 launch date, PERSTEL drew much positive feedback.

Many other marketing initiatives are planned in North Rhine Westphalia in 2002. They range from major events to intimate workshops, and many are in conjunction with WorldDAB, local retailers, broadcasters etc. Digital Radio West hopes other German States will follow suit to promote DAB Digital Radio.

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DIGITAL ONE IN COLOGNE

Digital One was also in Cologne in March for a repeat performance of its successful manufacturers' forum. DAB Digital Radio manufacturers met chip-

makers and broadcasters at a forum organised by Digital One and German digital radio's Marketing Initiative, IMDR.

The event was sponsored by second generation silicon manufacturers Bosch, Frontier Silicon, and Texas Instruments, and by Command Audio.

Forty-five senior representatives from 34 international companies heard about the latest developments in DAB Digital Radio technology, the good news of an "exploding market" in the UK, and advance notice of products planned for market later this year. They also saw first hand evidence of DAB software and chip solutions already available to manufacturers.

The aim was very specific - to focus on the immediate market opportunities for product manufacturers and to help them to understand the enabling technology and second generation silicon available to them right now.

WorldDAB's president, Annika Nyberg, was on hand to talk about international developments, and Helwin Lesch represented the IMDR with Germany's perspective. Other contributors to the day were the UK's Digital Radio Development Bureau with the story of the £99 radio, Quentin Howard for Digital One, Lindsay Cornell who talked about the BBC's new DAB Digital Radio stations, and RadioScape with a report on their EPG plans. There were also presentations on the successes achieved by VideoLogic and Roke Manor Research and a case history on the new Blaupunkt Woodstock DAB 52 in-car radio with MP3.

Digital One is preparing a glossy booklet based on the event. It will include detailed information of the Bosch, Panasonic, Texas Instruments and Frontier Silicon solutions and will be sent to manufacturers around the world.

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UPDATE ON AUSTRALIA

Planning for consumer focussed digital radio trials is proceeding rapidly in Australia with the arrival of the first batch of radio receivers that will be used in the trials. The dual band VideoLogic Hi-Fi tuners and portable DAB kitchen radios were unpacked and immediately tuned to local LBand SFN with ease.

A team of consumer researchers has been briefed to establish representative consumer panels and questionnaires for the first part of the trial. Transmission scenarios are being refined into two or three phase strategy and a number of manufacturers and suppliers have indicated their interest in participating in the trials.

The industry is working to a July 2002 timeline to have established VHF Band III transmissions in Sydney.

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PANASONIC SHOW GSM+DAB DEVICE

Panasonic were at the 3GSM Cannes Event in February showing early prototypes of a fully integrated GSM+DAB platform to selected potential customers, including broadcasters, network operators and content providers. The units were also shown in private to potential customers during the CeBIT show in Hannover in March.

The prototypes are based on Panasonic's high volume GD35 GSM+WAP mobile phone, upgraded with dual-band DAB receiver, rewind and audio/data storage capabilities and a fully integrated user interface. Panasonic say that work is progressing well on addressing the many technical issues that inevitably result from such an advanced platform.

Panasonic stress that it has made no commitment to produce this or any variant as a commercial product, however initial feedback is very positive and they will be continuing to invest in developing this and other value-added DAB platforms throughout 2002.

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NEW FROM KOREA

Two Korean based manufacturers, Personal Telecom Inc and Maycom, have exhibited new DAB products at CeBIT this year. Both use the Texas Instruments second generation chip.

Maycom Co. Ltd announced the DP-21, a hand-held DAB receiver weighing just 125mg and with a battery life of four hours, and the DR-21, the world's first DAB clock radio. The clock radio is mains-operated and sized at 120mm x 234mm x 103mm. It is expected to be in production the second quarter of 2002. For the full press release on from Texas Instruments visit <http://focus.ti.com/docs/pr/pressrelease.jhtml?prellid=sc02030>

Perstel (Personal Telecom Inc) also announced two new lightweight DAB portables. The DR-101 weighs just 40g without its batteries and is a dual DAB/FM radio. Two AA batteries will run the device for eight hours. Its sister product, the DR-201 adds MP3 playback and voice recording onto embedded flash memory, as well as USB connectivity for file transfer. Visit the Perstel web site for more information on these products: http://www.perstel.co.kr/frame_product_dab_101.asp

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SPLIT PROGRAMMING IN CANADA

The CRTC has given permission to each of Canada's 55 DAB Digital Radio broadcasters to broadcast up to 14 hours a week of unique DAB programming on top of their regular analogue broadcasts. This has allowed the stations to experiment with digital only audio and text programming. Sports channels using DAB, for example, can broadcast international rugby matches on digital radio while staying with regular programming on analogue. A Montreal music station

is using DAB to simulcast and promote its Web site and plans to send out text messages to LCD equipped DAB receivers.

At a meeting in Toronto earlier this year, programme directors from Canada's top radio stations met to discuss standards. David Bray, chairman of the Digital Radio Roll-out Inc said the aim of the meeting was to ensure that consumers "are supplied with glitch-free services" and can receive all the added-value offered by DAB anywhere in Canada.

Canada endures the same problem as the rest of the world in terms of a lack of affordable equipment, but that is set to change with General Motors installing DAB receivers in its Canadian models this year, and RadioShack selling portable DAB radios this Spring. Canadian broadcasters are motivated to create more digital-only content to help drive receiver sales and cross-promote their websites.

Click here for the full press releases -

http://www.worlddab.org/pressreleases/DAB_programming_features.pdf ... or visit the Canadian DAB web site at <http://www.digitalradio.ca/>

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NAMIBIA LOOKS TO DIGITAL BROADCASTING

The Namibia Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) held a conference in early March to look at digital broadcasting for radio and television. As a result of the conference, greater and on-going co-operation between SABA (Southern Africa Broadcasting Association) and SADIBA (Southern African Digital Broadcasting Association) is planned. The importance of regional co-operation and collaboration in view of common systems and standards and the possibility of arriving at cheaper, mass-produced receivers for Namibia was also deliberated.

SADIBA has been invited to address Southern African broadcasters at the SABA General Assembly in October on the subject of meeting new challenges. While the immediate emphasis will be on DTT, Southern African broadcasters are equally interested in DAB radio.

For further information, visit the SADIBA web site at: <http://www.sadiba.co.za/>

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WORLDDAB TECHNICAL WORKSHOP

A reminder that the World DAB Technical Committee Workshop takes place in Zurich May 23/24 this year. The Workshop looks at the value chain for the benefit of content providers, transmission providers and device manufacturers. For more information visit the WorldDAB web site at: http://www.worlddab.org/events/events_frame.htm

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