

Highlights From The Maximizing Radio and Mobile TV in the Digital Age Seminar 8 April, Brussels, Belgium

Hosted by: WorldDMB

Welcome Address:

The WorldDMB President, Quentin Howard, welcomed the participants to the Maximizing Radio and Mobile TV seminar. During the welcome speech Mr Howard mentioned that more recently the discussion between WorldDMB and the European Commission has centred on the question of Mobile TV standards. But he further added that this was not the sole reason for the conference. WorldDMB's interests are far broader than that, and for a majority of the Forum's members, the successful digitisation of radio remains the primary concern.



In order to frame the discussions for the day Mr Howard concluded his speech with a summary of the important points for the European Commission to consider.

Firstly, radio is important. It is too important to ignore. Radio is going digital and therefore needs to be encouraged to go digital. Whilst this is a national issue, there are pan-European matters common to all member states and the EC has a positive role to play here, encouraging member states to adopt a framework of positive regulation and spectrum allocation for radio.

Secondly, the EC should not do anything to damage digital radio. Unfortunately, the push for DVB-H is having this effect, quite simply because the message is being interpreted as anything that isn't DVB-H is not welcome. This produces uncertainty for regulators and broadcasters, fearful that they may be backing the "wrong" technology. Mr Howard asked the European Commission to find a way to actively encourage its other European broadcast technologies, such as DAB based technology which is already delivering a future for digital radio and allowing radio broadcasters to meet the challenges of taking radio from a purely sound medium into one of rich multimedia mobile content.

Technology Challenge: Implications of Spectrum Policy and Standards



This session focused on the current available spectrum for digital radio and mobile TV as well as the implications if this is lost to other platforms. During this debate the moderator, Matteo Maggiore, *asked panellists their views regarding the digitization of radio and the role regulators and the commission should play in terms of spectrum policy and technology choice.*

Michael Shotter, member of the Cabinet of Commissioner Viviane Reding, expressed the Commission's views on the digitization of mobile multimedia. He mentioned that the digital dividend was built on the regulatory framework and should not be viewed as a threat to those who are currently using the spectrum. Mobile multimedia can benefit from the digital dividend and unlock the potential for the European Union as an economic body for both consumers and industry. Enabling Article 17 will allow mobile TV to be rolled out more successfully across Europe. DAB has benefited from this in the past. This is not a contradiction of the Commission's policy on 'technology neutrality' and DVB-H is not seen as dogma.

Philip Laven, former technical director for the European Broadcasting Union, warned participants that technology does not stand still. Regulators therefore need be cautious when considering the mandation of a particular standard. Peter Davies, Director of Radio Policy and Broadcast Licensing at OFCOM, agreed with Mr Laven and voiced his position of technology neutrality. In the UK, there are various plans to use a variety of different mobile TV standards as each business proposal has different requirements. Pal Belenyasi, senior

adviser at the National Communications Authority of Hungary, added that clarity from the Commission does help regulators when planning for spectrum use.

Future of Digital Radio and its prospects for Mobile Multimedia

The second panel discussion was chaired by Alain Masse, Deputy Director to the President of Radio France. This panel looked into *the transition to digital radio and how broadcasters can use multimedia to create new content as well as enhance the user listening experience.*

Nick Piggott, Head of Creative Technology at GCap Media and John Ousby, Head of Distribution Technologies, Radio and Music Interactive at the BBC began the session with a presentation on the various multimedia applications that are currently available using the DAB family of standards. The presentation focused on visual radio and interactivity, which will allow broadcasters to enter the new multimedia era and create innovative content for the consumer.

Helwin Lesch, General Manager for Bayerische Rundfunk then gave a short presentation on the reasons why broadcasters need to switch to digital radio. The German broadcasters are keen to have similar visual services to those presented by the UK. Charles-Emmanuel Bon, Director of Development for RTL Group showed the group a short video clip on France's view for the future of digital radio. It seemed that all three presentations focused on the following: improving the text services, a visualization for radio and the collaboration across Europe. Dr Helga Truepel, MEP and Vice Chair of the Committee on Culture and Education, further supported these views on the digitization of radio and its importance for European consumers.

State of Play: Lessons learned from Mobile services

Commercial mobile TV services have been launched in a few countries throughout Europe, however there has been limited feedback regarding the success of such services. During this session, panellists had the opportunity to share experiences and ideas regarding consumer response to such services as well as ways in which other countries can better prepare for their commercial launches. The session was moderated by Quentin Howard, President, WorldDMB, *who asked panellists if there was a conflict of interest between broadcasters and telecoms in regards to content for mobile services.*

Ignais Guardans, MEP, mentioned that the industry is changing. Spectrum was once broadcasters sole asset and now they must share this spectrum. There are other issues, which do relate solely to content. Simon Mason, Head of Mobile Media Solutions at Arqiva further added that there are various factors, which must be considered when choosing one mobile TV standard over another. While a broadcaster may prefer a technology that will offer broad coverage with few services a telecom may prefer to cover large cities with many services.



Malcolm Harbour, MEP, expanded the debate by drawing attention onto other factors such as eSafety and intelligent car solutions. There are other areas in mobile broadcasting, which need be considered as the potential for these applications will benefit both radio and television.

Bernd Langeheine, Director of Information Society at the European Commission, commented on the Commission's move to support DVB-H for mobile TV. Commissioner Redding has put pressure on the patent pool to finalize the IPR costs for the technology and there is now progress being made. Mr Langeheine also mentioned that everyone is choosing DVB-H after the Commission's communication. However, Martin Liss, Content Director for Mobiles Fernsehen Deutschland, explained that his company rolled out the commercial DMB services in Germany and they plan to run both DVB-H and DMB commercial services in the country.