

WORLD DAB Newsletter

International News and Strategic Analysis on Digital Sound Broadcasting

The Penguins are still swimming!



The second 'Right to Reply' is written by Dr. Stephan Ory who is General Manager of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Privater Rundfunk (APR, Association of Private Radios) which currently represents 183 local and regional private radio stations in Germany.

In 1995 the world was bright. In Berlin, at the Internationale Funkausstellung (IFA), radio broadcasters listened to the manufacturers who explained how fast the market would grow with cheap and easy-to-use receivers. All DAB enthusiasts listened eagerly to David Witherow who told us that we should be front row penguins. Front row penguins are the first to dive into unknown waters. Either a front row penguin comes up with a fish in his mouth or a shark comes up with a front row penguin between his teeth. Well, we are now in the year 2000 and the broadcasters have not yet found a fish; but the sharks are pretty close.

Are the manufacturers ready for a rescue operation? What exactly are the broadcasters' problems?

The manufacturers have their own personal agenda which is to begin sales of DAB receivers in the high end market and then, step by step, sell new and cheaper receivers.

On the other hand, the broadcasters interests lie within the mass audience and require low-cost receivers on the market as soon as possible. In Germany, there are programmes on the air and there are even

new formats which have been created specifically for DAB audiences. These, however, are mainly directed towards young listeners, who do not spend hours sitting in the family car listening to the radio! This, therefore, is hardly a mass audience. Although it is a known fact that around 20% of radio listening takes place in cars, 80% takes place elsewhere - in the bathroom, the kitchen or the office. In other words, the broadcasters urgently need home receivers as well as car receivers in order to be able to earn their advertising revenue.

In spite of the problems facing the broadcasters, the coverage of DAB in Germany is growing and the Regulatory Authority for Telecommunications and Post (RegTP) has begun licensing DAB networks. This process should be completed by the end of this year. The conditions for licensing set out by RegTP require the operators of DAB networks to cover 80% of the area within three years thus giving broadcasters, manufacturers and the car industry a solid basis on which to proceed with their own plans.

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EU Portuguese Presidency

In Partnership with the European Commission, the Institute for Media organised a conference on Digital Audio Broadcasting to coincide with the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The Institute for Media (Instituto da Comunicacao Socia - ICS), which is responsible for regulating the media sector in Portugal, focused the conference on technology aspects and New Content for DAB with a particular focus on implementation models.

The event, which took place on 5th April in the beautiful setting of the Palace Foz in Lisbon, was politically very useful politically. The conclusions, which will shortly be published, will produce an agenda for the Council of Culture Ministers to use in order to deal with and create a context for the Parliamentary Hearing on Radio that is taking place on 24th May 2000.

The conference also provided an important opportunity to raise the profile of both

2nd WorldDAB Multimedia Conference: Hailed a great success

The second WorldDAB Multimedia conference took place on 15th and 16th March 2000 in London with more than 80 delegates participating.

The conference, which was chaired by Glyn Jones (BBC) and Quentin Howard (Digital One), tried to combine traditional presentations with panel sessions giving the audience an opportunity to interview the presenters.

The main issue arising from the conference was the need for a road map of DAB applications and a need to prioritise and specify which applications should be implemented. This would encourage manufacturers to roll-out receivers because they would be receiving clear guidelines from WorldDAB as to what the broadcasters/content providers wish to use. Currently, the receiver manufacturers are waiting for a 'killer' application which is delaying the roll-out of receivers.

The three outstanding elements are:

1) Where specifications are already in place (BWS, SLS, Slide Show), WorldDAB should implement guidelines and Codes of Practice outlining a hierarchy of applications which the broadcasters and manufacturers should commit to bringing

to the market place. A decision on the political level needs to be taken as to which applications are needed and then a technical decision needs to be taken to find out how the application will fit in.

- 2) If applications are already available (e.g. MP3 Streaming, TPEG), WorldDAB needs to ensure that these are defined and fully explained so that everyone knows how to implement them ('Guidelines for Implementation').
- 3) Applications that still need to be standardised (e.g. e-commerce/m-commerce).

The Steering Board of the World DAB Forum, along with Module A, is now considering how to carry out these tasks within the quickest possible timescales. The ultimate goal should be to develop a set of WorldDAB recommendations.

The conference, along with the traditional English dinner of fish and chips, was deemed a great success. The Action Plan

has been posted on the web site for members to view and up-dates on progress will be reported on.

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PSION TAKES STAKE IN RADIOSCAPE LTD

On 27th April, 2000, it was announced that Psion PLC has acquired, for £3 million, a 7.4% stake in RadioScape Ltd, a London-based software house specialising in digital radio technology and a member of the World DAB Forum since 1998.

RadioScape have developed software components for digital radio, initially focused on the international Eureka 147 standard. The company is also applying its 'Software Defined Radio' approach to Third Generation UMTS cellular wireless systems. RadioScape technology forms part of Wavefinder™, Psion InfoMedia's first Digital Radio product which will be available in the retail market from autumn 2000.

Wavefinder™ was demonstrated during the WorldDAB Multimedia conference which took place in London on 15th and 16th March 2000. The digital radio

aerial is linked to the PC and hooked onto the wall. The RadioScape software is installed in the PC allowing the user to click on the required icon (for example BBC 2 or Classic FM) to listen to their chosen programme. When in use the aerial radiates colours making it an interesting design item.

As explained by David Levin, CEO of Psion PLC, this investment builds on the relationship established in developing Wavefinder™, and compliments Psion's existing mobile internet technologies.

New Members!

 **Psion InfoMedia** is the newest division in Psion PLC, a group of successful Innovation companies dedicated to pervasive information technology - information devices providing access to digital information and services at any time, from any location.

Psion InfoMedia will focus on its strengths in product development, design and market understanding and will contract out other activities such as production.

Located in central London, it will draw on a range of skills across virtual teams around the globe to develop a range of innovative interactive information and entertainment appliances for the home and mobile environments.

It's first product in the field of Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB), was previewed at CeBIT in late February 2000.

Signing of Agreement between Asian DAB Committee and World DAB Forum, Singapore, 7th June 2000

During the Broadcast Asia Conference and Exhibition which is taking place in Singapore from 7th June to 9th June 2000, the President of the World DAB Forum, Mr Michael McEwen, and the CEO of the Singapore Broadcasting Authority, Mr Lim Hock Chuan, will sign a bilateral agreement to set up the Asian DAB Committee of the World DAB Forum. This event will be a huge step in the World DAB Forum's work to promote DAB on a world

wide basis and especially in the Asia Pacific region which is so important to the future development and success of Digital Radio.

The agreement between the two parties will be signed during a Press Conference. Broadcast Asia encompasses CableSat and Professional Audio Technology and is recognised as the key meeting point for the industry in Asia.

The Singapore Broadcasting Authority is organising an exhibition involving the Radio Corporation of Singapore (RCS) and many of the leading receiver manufacturers. RCS will broadcast its daily DAB show live from the stand and this will involve interviews with key figures involved in the roll-out of DAB.

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